Walsall & Willenhall
CHRONICLE
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Nuisance neighbour played song on loop at full volume

JAIL FOR SHEERAN BALLAD TORMENT

BY JORDAN HARRIS

A MOTHER-OF-THREE who drove her neighbours potty playing an Ed Sheeran song at top volume over and over again has been sent to jail.

Sonia Bryce tormented next-door neighbour Clare Tidmarsh with the din from her home in Howe Crescent, Willenhall.

And 'the straw that broke the camel's back' came when Bryce played the same Ed Sheeran ballad, Shape of You, on a loop for about half an hour.

Ballad – Ed Sheeran

Mrs Tidmarsh, her husband and five children endured a "wholly unacceptable level of disturbance through loud noise involving music, shouting, swearing and banging – time and time again – emanating from Miss Bryce's home", said Judge Philip Gregory.

Landlords Walsall Housing Group Ltd had secured a court order barring Bryce from creating a nuisance or annoyance. But she had been repeatedly arrested for breaching that injunction and was handed a six-week jail term last December.

She was released in February, but after another complaint the case came before Judge Gregory at Walsall County Court. Mrs Tidmarsh said her life had been plagued by "numerous comings and goings at her neighbour's property". She had kept a detailed "diary of events" cataloguing the racket from her neighbour's home. She also installed CCTV.

The judge, at a hearing earlier this month, said Miss Bryce had "displayed ungovernable animosity" to her neighbour and had committed four further breaches of the injunction in February.

The offending Ed Sheeran track was played relentlessly for about half an hour before Bryce finally left in a taxi. She denied playing the music, insisting that "she doesn't even like" Sheeran's songs. The judge, however, rejected her evidence.

Mrs Tidmarsh told the judge she "could no longer cope living next door to Miss Bryce and her family and her continuous stream of visitors".

She felt driven to take the drastic step of quitting her semi-detached home and renting it out to get away.

Bryce accused Mrs Tidmarsh of "goading" her and claimed she was only moving out because she needed a bigger home. But the judge said the Tidmarsh family were "perfectly decent and respectable people" who had the misfortune to live next door to Bryce.

Jailing Bryce for eight weeks, he added: "You must learn that you should behave as a reasonable and responsible adult, and not make life for your neighbours the misery that you have".

HEALTH CENTRE 'UNSIGHTLY' DAMAGE REMAINS

The health centre, seen with safety tape cordoning off the entrance, which was left damaged following a vandal attack

EXTENSIVE damage to the front of the busy Darlaston Health Centre has still not been repaired after several weeks and is preventing patients from getting in the front door.

Calls are now being made for the 'unsightly' damage to be fixed as soon as possible. Vandals targeted the health centre on Pinfold Street in January, damaging the front doors and structural poles by the entrance. Visitors have since had to get into the health centre through the rear of the site, which has been deemed 'not good enough' by Councillor Doug James, who represents the area. The front doors to the centre are covered in tape, while one of the front windows is boarded up. Councillor James said: "It gives off the wrong impression of both the site and the town.

"The damage is unsightly. I don't think it is right that people are having to use the rear entrance. I have made numerous inquiries as to what is being done and all I have been told is that quotations are being gathered. It's not good enough, a local company could have done this in half an hour."

The centre was also the scene of a road accident in February when a baby girl suffered injuries to her upper body and head after her buggy was hit by a car outside. The baby was treated for injuries to her face, shoulder and arm before being taken to Walsall Manor Hospital. Police later confirmed the injuries were not serious.

Afterwards a petition was launched for safer crossing to be introduced on Pinfold Street. So far, nearly 500 people have signed the petition, which labels the crossing 'vile and dangerous'. Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group said they had been told by NHS Property Services that structural work had been carried out and they were awaiting a quote for repairs to the door. NHS Property Services were not available for comment.

RAILWAYS

Fresh call for town to get train station

FRESH calls have been made for a train station to be opened in Willenhall.

A new station has been long mooted, but so far nothing concrete has been announced regarding either a new station or the old one in Rose Hill being reopened.

Councillor Ian Shires said: "I welcome the news that the West Midlands Combined Authority is set to start a number of extensions to Midland Metro.

"We need to make sure Willenhall see the benefits of improved social mobility which will come from this investment. At the moment we stand very much on the edge of

TRAFFIC

Drivers told avoid M5 during works

Drivers have been urged not to use the M5 during a major 18-month roadworks scheme unless they have to.

Motorists are facing a traffic nightmare from Easter when the speed limit between junctions one for West Bromwich and two for Oldbury is slashed to 30mph along the two-mile stretch.

Drivers are facing chaos until the end of 2018. Highways England has insisted the work to replace waterproofing on the crumbling Oldbury viaduct cannot be put off any longer.

Bosses also stressed the job could not have been done overnight.

ATTRACTION

Local history centre to cut opening hours

WALSALL'S Local History Centre will only be open two days a week from next month as council cuts force it to move premises.

From April 1 the centre will open just Tuesday and Wednesdays and not Thursdays and Saturdays.The centre in Essex Street is moving into Walsall's central library on Lichfield Street.

It said: "To ensure that all the necessary preparation is made to remove the archives and local history services successfully and safely, the Local History Centre will be revising it's opening hours. This change is a temporary measure and will remain in place until the move is completed."

INSIDE

VISITOR IS OUT OF THIS WORLD

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01543 465305
E-mail: walsall.chronicles@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Sarah Jones
Tel: 01543 465341
E-mail: sarah.winfield-jones@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Marguerita Finnegan
Tel: 01902 319627
E-mail: marguerita.finnegan@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Phil Morris
Tel: 01902 319177
E-mail: p.morris@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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We need you to help with the hole truth

DRIVERS are increasingly facing a new menace on our roads that is causing tens of thousands of pounds damage to cars and poses a danger to road users – potholes.

Roads across the region are crumbling with a backlog in road maintenance, more traffic on the roads and the weather blamed for the pothole epidemic we are now facing.

Despite Government funding to help councils tackle the problem, potholes are popping up everywhere with experts estimating it will take nine years to clear the backlog of maintenance needed on our roads.

Drowning in a deluge of complaints about potholes, councils say they have to prioritise main roads and those where the damage poses the greatest risk to the public. As the councils target the roads they believe should benefit from the Government funding, we want you to help us highlight the worst potholes you know.

Which road feels more like an off-road track as you bounce along? Where are the deep potholes that risk puncturing tyres or damaging your car's suspension? Are there any roads you avoid now because they are so badly damaged?

The Chronicle wants to identify the top 10 pothole black spots across Staffordshire and the Black Country to flag up to our councils. We want our readers, the people who have to drive on these pothole-ridden routes every day, to have their say on which roads need to be prioritised. To help us highlight the 'top ten' of the worst potholes, can you drop us a line telling us exactly where the pothole is and if possible attach a picture. Don't worry if it is just a snapshot, we just need an idea of the damage to the road.

Please email details of the road which is damaged, a picture if possible, your name and any comments you would like to make to Sue.Attwater@expressandstar.co.uk

Alternatively, drop us a line at Editorial, The Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Driving us potty! As councils count costs

COUNCILS across the region are spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in compensation to drivers because of the shocking state of the roads, figures have revealed.

Staffordshire County Council has had to pay out more than £270,000 in compensation to drivers in the last four years.

Between 2012/13 and 2015/16 a total of 3,715 claims were made against the authority – with some still not resolved after four years. During the period the authority, responsible for highways maintenance, paid out £273,265 to motorists who had suffered accidents due to the poorly treated roads.

Walsall Council paid out £4,282 in compensation over 43 claims in 2015/16 and £9,366 for 71 claims the year before that. While in 2013/14 there was £15,022 paid for 143 claims and £29,642 the year before for 201 claims.

In Sandwell, there were 23 successful claims made by drivers in 2014/15, compared to 36 in 2013/14, 88 in 2012/13 and 72 in 2011/12. The amount paid out by the council in those years was £48,217 in 2014/15, £98,462 the year before, £351,669 and £563,921 in 2011/12.

Disgrace

Meanwhile Dudley Council has revealed that it paid out more than £22,000 in compensation over damage caused by potholes during a two-year period. Some 270 claims were lodged by drivers against the council between 2014 and 2016 over damage caused by crumbling roads.

Staffordshire County Councillor Gordon Alcott said: "To me it is a disgrace that the council has had to spend this much public money on paying out for damaged caused by potholes.

"They know there is a huge problem but they don't seem to be bothered about fixing it or improving the situation.

"Some of the roads in Staffordshire are abysmal. I know already that cyclists, HGV drivers and motorcyclists are having to swerve out of the way of some potholes and I just worry that it is a matter of time until someone is seriously injured."

Recently the Chronicle revealed that 38 reports about potholes on just one roundabout were made to the county council, the Five Ways island in Heath Hayes.

The island at Five Ways, Heath Hayes near Cannock, for which there were complaints about 38 potholes

Long road ahead to deal with backlog

SOME £1.25 billion is needed to get roads in the West Midlands back into reasonable condition with one in six needing to be repaired or even facing closure within the next five years, a damning report has revealed.

An ageing network, decades of underfunding, increased traffic and wetter winters has led to around 17 per cent of all local roads reported as being in poor structural condition, with less than five years of life remaining, according to the Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey.

The number of potholes filled on the crumbling road network over the last year has dropped again for the second successive year, but is still high at 1.7 million – which works out as one every 19 seconds.

The ALARM survey, produced by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), is now in its 22nd year and is seen by many as the most authoritative and comprehensive study into local road maintenance funding and condition.

It reports that nationwide local authorities need over £12 billion to bring the network up to scratch – a figure that has remained largely unchanged for four years – and the gap between the amount they received this year and the amount they say they need to keep the carriageway in reasonable order is almost £730 million.

And it will take nine years to clear the backlog of carriage maintenance in the region, according to the report. It costs an average of £69 per pothole.

Alan Mackenzie, chairman of the AIA, said: "Potholes are a symptom of poorly maintained roads but spending money fixing them in isolation, although essential, is wasteful. The most efficient way to deal with our crumbling roads is to fix them properly and stop potholes forming in the first place. "It is time we had a rethink."

Parents hit by fines for failing over attendance

THE number of fines handed out to parents for failing to get their child to regularly attend school more than doubled in some areas of the West Midlands.

In Staffordshire fines issued rose from 808 in 2014/15 to 1,643 in 2015/16 – when 132 parents were prosecuted. In Dudley the number of fines increased from 370 to 844, with 172 prosecuted, and in Sandwell they almost doubled from 113 to 216, with four prosecuted.

In Walsall the number of fines went up from 1,517 to 1,770, but no-one was prosecuted last year.

The only exception to this trend was Wolverhampton where fines fell from 698 to 645 with 42 prosecuted.

The issue of fines to parents for pupil's non-attendance hit the news last year when a father in the Isle of Wight was fined £120 after he took his daughter out of school for a holiday in term time.

The High Court decided his punishment was unlawful, leading Staffordshire Council to suspend the practice of fining parents for going away with their children during term time.

Councillor Claire Darke, the City of Wolverhampton Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "We want the best possible education for children and young people in Wolverhampton, and for this to happen, they need to be attending school. By permitting their children to be off school in anything other than exceptional circumstances, parents are not only undermining the work of the school but also compromising their child's learning and development."

Vandals target cars in street

VANDALS smashed through the windows of five cars on one Brownhills street during a late night crime spree.

Residents on Round Hill Way woke up last Friday to find that both the passenger and driver windows on their cars had been smashed, with the interiors 'turned upside down' in a search for valuables.

Resident Rona Bliss said that the damage was 'senseless' and called on others in the community to ensure they don't give thieves any opportunity to do the same to them.

Rona's car, as well as her husband Darren's and son Cameron's were all hit during the attack.

She said: "I woke up at 7.30am ready to go to work and my husband, who had been up before me and taken the dog for a walk, came in and told me that I wouldn't be going to work today.

"I spent all morning cleaning glass up and it just feels like such a senseless crime.

"I understand that this kind of thing does happen all over but it's a real wake up sign when it happens to you.

"There wasn't anything expensive on display or anything like that but I suppose they just wanted to take a chance."

Mrs Bliss, 50, has lived on Round Hill for more than 25 years and says that she has never known such serious incidents to take place.

MP urges a U-turn over funds move for schools

WALSALL MP David Winnick has called for a Government U-turn on its controversial new funding formula for schools, which is set to hit the borough's establishments with the loss of £19 millions.

The Walsall North representative stated that in light Chancellor Philip Hammond scrapping the much criticised national insurance rise for the self-employed, he would react similarly to concerns schools were facing a 'financial crisis'.

Mr Winnick said: "The Government's intention to change the formula for schools has caused a furore nationally, and certainly among schools in my constituency.

"In view of this, I would hope the Government will act as it did over the budget proposals to increase national insurance for the self-employed. Due to widespread opposition, it withdrew the proposals within a few days.

"Schools in the borough, as indeed elsewhere, are already facing tight financial pressures; any reduction in the existing allocation would lead, according to the heads and chairs of governors, to an outright financial crisis.

"It is estimated that if the proposals go ahead, the Walsall borough alone will lose some £19m in school budgets over the next two years. At the moment, over half the secondary schools here are already running deficit budgets. Do Ministers understand this?"

Woman on three charges of fraud

A 47-YEAR-old woman has pleaded not guilty to three counts of fraud by abuse of position from when she was a carer. Janice Leverett, of Bury St Edmunds, appeared at Walsall Magistrates Court charged with three counts of fraud by abuse of position. They relate to her time as a carer living on Carlton Crescent, Burntwood.

It is alleged that between March 28 and June 5 last year, she dishonestly abused her position intending to make a gain of £3,560 from a person in her care and another £1,420 from a second victim. It is also alleged that between December 7, 2015 and June 7 last year, she abused her position to gain £4,250 from a third victim.

She was bailed to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on April 21.

Rural village is setting for walk

IN the first of their new summer programme of walks The Walsall Group of the Ramblers will be heading to Blakedown, near Kidderminster, for a 7.5 mile circular walk on Sunday.

'Churchill and Blakedown' is an undulating walk on good tracks with good views. Non-members are always welcome and can obtain more information from the walk leaders on 07582 091 920 or 07587 741 894.

Just the start for me, says Voice star

Out – Jason Jones, from Brownhills

THE Voice star Jason Jones insists "this is just the start" after bowing out of the singing competition on Saturday night.

The former RAC call-centre worker, from Brownhills, missed out on a place in the final with his rendition of Kings Of Leon's Use Somebody live on ITV.

His opening performance was praised by the judges but wasn't backed by the voting public to make it through the semi-finals.

The 32-year-old father said: "It was really good. I enjoyed it and have had a great time. But this is not the end and just the start. The plan is to wait and see what offers I get but I'm hopeful something will happen.

"I've had emails from songwriters already asking me to do things. I'm just going to sit and wait for my opportunity."

Jason was a part of Team Will with Black Eyes Peas star will.i.am and battled it through the auditions, battle rounds, knockout and quarter finals to reach the penultimate hurdle.

However Jason, who quit his job at the RAC in hope of focusing on his music career, felt he was not given the full support of his mentor.

He said: "I don't feel that he (Will) backed me that much. I don't think the song I was given was right."

But he added: "It's not over yet. What an experience its been."

Jason will play a homecoming gig at the Park Gate Inn in Cannock Wood tomorrow night (Friday).

Staff at the pub donned custom-made T-shirts and kitted it out with banners in support of their friend. Follow Jason on Twitter at @jasejonessinger

Twin sisters celebrate a double diamond day

THEY were married on the same day 60 years ago and now, as they celebrate their diamond wedding anniversaries, twins sister Mary and Connie still live just a few doors away from each other.

Mary and Henry Smith and Connie and Desmond Stanfield got married in a double wedding at St John's Church in Pleck on March 23 1957.

The 81-year-old sisters grew up in Gower Street in Pleck where they still live today and still meet up every single day of the week.

Mary said: "Its an unusual thing for twins to celebrate a diamond anniversary and both live in the same street all these years later. I've never heard anything like it before."

Perhaps surprisingly, they celebrated their anniversaries separately. Desmond, 82, said: "We had a big party on Saturday night at our house with our family and friends. Henry and Mary had a separate party at the King George V pub. It was a great evening and celebration."

Connie and Desmond met on a blind date. He whisked her off on his old motorbike and the rest, as they sat, is history. Together, they have three sons Stephen, Mark and Alan as well as five granddaughters and four grandchildren.

Meanwhile Mary met Henry, 80, at a dance hall when he spotted her across the room and knew she was the one. They went on to have four boys Neil, John, Wayne and Pat, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

On spending his life with Mary, Henry said: "I think we're pretty good at what we do and being together. I don't argue much because she tells me where to go.

"I remember just looking over the dance floor and that was it. I was only 17 at the time.

"The party on Saturday was brilliant. There were about over 100 people there at the King George V boozer in Pleck. We had a sing-song and a good drink which was nice."

Mary said: "We've just got on. I look after him well enough. Me and Connie are really close and have never had an argument."

Connie and Mary both worked at Stafford and Son leatherworks for a number of years. While Mary went on to be a housewife, her sister was a cleaner for over 30 years.

Both men served in the army while Henry worked at a steel and gasworks before spending 32 years servicing washing machines. Desmond was a miner at Walsall Wood colliery and also spent time as a foreman.

Diamond couples – Mary and Henry Smith, left, with her twin sister Connie and Desmond Stanfield

Enjoying their double wedding day are Mary and Henry, left, with Connie and Desmond

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lees line up for charity match

POP'S Lee Ryan and Lee Latchford-Evans are the latest stars to sign up for the Smile for Joel football match in Walsall later this year.

Ryan from Blue, will be playing in the match between the Smiling Saddlers and Compton Wolves while Latchford-Evans, from Steps, will be an assistant manager to Shayne Ward, at the Saddlers.

Tickets cost £10 for adults and £5 for juniors and are available to buy from the Banks's Stadium ticket office on 01922 651416. The May 13 match is also in aid of Compton Hospice.

Go-ahead for flats to replace outlet

PLANS to replace a post office and flats with homes and a shop have been given the go-ahead.

The proposals will see numbers 42 to 44 in Butts Road, Walsall, which currently house a post office and two flats, razed to the ground. A new shop and 10 one-bedroom flats will be built in their place under the plans, expanding onto land in Westbourne Street.

The applicant, in his planning statement, said: "The existing buildings are in a poor state of repair and the site needs to be developed for a more efficient use of land."

Go-ahead to build eight new homes

PLANS to build a number of homes in Aldridge have been approved. Proposals submitted by Oakley Architects will see eight homes and external car parking created on land at Portland Road.

They were originally submitted in November 2016 and have now been given the go-ahead by Walsall Council. Oakley Architects said: "The new houses will create an attractive development that will be complimentary to the surrounding location."

Services hit after man dies in rail tragedy

A MAN died after he was hit by a train in Stafford.

The incident caused all rail services through the town to be suspended on Friday.

He died after he was hit by a train at the railway station at 12.25pm, British Transport Police said. His death is not being treated as suspicious and officers are working to identify the man.

All rail services through the town were either cancelled or delayed as a result of the incident.

Police alert on calls

POLICE issued a warning on Twitter to residents after reports of a possible bogus caller in Walsall.

Police called for people's caution if they are unsure as to who they are. @WMPContact tweeted: "Reports of a possible Bogus Caller. Not sure? Don't let them in and dial 999 immediately."

cafe in the square

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COUNTY NEWS

Glasses unveiled for anniversary

BLACK Country brewery Bathams is introducing new 140th anniversary glasses in its pubs.

The family-owned brewery has been going since 1877 and five generations have now been involved in producing its beers.

The existing Bathams brewery is located at behind the The Vine Inn, Delph Road, Brierley Hill, which is better knowns as The Bull and Bladder.

Bathams produce three diferent cask ales – Bathams Best Bitter, Bathams Mild Ale and Bathams XXX.

Sir Lenny backs book on staffing

A NEW book endorsed by Dudley-born Sir Lenny Henry and put together by a university aims to put inclusivity into the heart of the newsroom, ensuring that journalists better reflect the diversity of the UK population.

Everybody In, by Birmingham City University, tackles protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender, religion and sexuality, as well as class, Islamophobia and regionalism.

The themes of the book have already resonated strongly with the Executive Board of the Broadcast Journalism Training Council.

Rental market still growing

THE rental market continues to grow and shows no signs of slowing down, according to lettings and estate agency chain Connells. Connells is seeing six tenants chase every rental property on the market across its national network of branches.

It helped 24 per cent more tenants move into homes last year and is urging landlords to take advantage of current demand and asking prospective tenants to get in touch to secure the best properties on the market.

City pizza gig for American singer

AMERICAN recording artist Dean Friedman will be performing in Birmingham's Pizza Express as part of a city concert tour.

Best known for his hits Lucky Stars and Lydia Friedman will be at the restaurant on April 21. The tour coincides with the release of a brand new fan-funded album – his first new album release in seven years.

Tickets to all of Friedman's tour dates are available via www.Dean-Friedman.com

Schedule takes off

RYANAIR'S winter schedule from Birmingham Airport this year will have 21 routes in total.

It includes daily flights to Barcelona, six flights a week to Alicante and five to Malaga.

The winter routes are now on sale on the Ryanair.com website.

Woman gets £14k payout from dentist

A WOMAN has been given a £14,000 payout over treatment by a Walsall dentist which she says left her with mouth pain for three years.

Caitlin Mallon says she lost two teeth, suffered pain, infection and even bad breath. She claimed her problems began in 2008 when dentist Dr Puneet Jain, working out of two surgeries at the time including Aldridge Dental Practice, told her there was a problem with her teeth. But between then and 2011 the 66-year-old went on to have implants and bridges, which have since had to be replaced.

Mrs Mallon's case was successfully settled out of court this year to the tune of £14,000 after The Dental Law Partnership (TDLP) took up her case. Dr P Jain did not admit liability.

Dr P Jain, who no longer works at Aldridge Dental Practice, said: "I would like to make it clear that I do not agree with the facts as conveyed by TDLP, but I will not provide details of the patient's treatment because of my professional duty to protect their confidentiality.

"However, I am pleased that the matter has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion so that all the parties involved can now move on."

Mrs Mallon, from Poolfields, Newcastle Under-Lyme, said she suffered pain for three years. After some treatmen Mrs Mallon said she went for a second opinion. According to TDLP the new dentist was 'shocked' at the treatment she had received.

The partnership added: "Dr Jain had fitted the implants and bridges so poorly they needed to be replaced immediately."

Saddlers take action to beat troublemakers

By Jordan Harris

TRAVELLERS, vandals and trespassers have forced Walsall Football Club to ask for a new driveway for members of the Saddlers Club.

Walsall Football Club, who moved to Banks's Stadium at Bescot Crescent in 1990, have had a planning application granted by officers from Walsall Council that will see a new driveway created for members of the social club to gain access in the evenings.

At present, the club has had to leave its main car park open so members can get access, which club officials say has led to problems.

The club says that it has trouble 'every evening' with trespassers who leave litter on the site and have raised concerns from nearby residents.

Travellers set up camp on the public car park three times last year, forcing the club to pay a private security firm to move them on.

Some regulars at the Banks's Stadium were forced to park away from their usual spaces on the occasions they did pitch up there.

Complaints

Club director Daniel Mole said: "In 2016, we had travellers on the site on three separate occasions and as the land is private property, we had to pay a private security firm to move them from our property.

"Every evening, trespassers loiter and litter the site and we have received numerous complaints from neighbouring residents whose property has been damaged, along with our own, by local youths entering the site and breaking windows or throwing eggs at windows.

"At the moment we have our access open at all hours, which is not safe for us, but has to be done in order to allow people to access the Saddlers Club.

"This is news that will lead to a change in that and we hope that this will lead to less vandalism on our site."

Plans submitted in October 2016 have been granted by council officers, however the current plan is different from that which was originally presented.

It's a blast for Don as he lands at golf club

Astronaut Dr Don with future space cadets Bobby Taylor, Jamie Marsden-Bishop, Elfie Taylor and Logan Deakin

HE has spent 44 days in space and orbited the Earth nearly 700 times – now astronaut Don Thomas can say he has been to Walsall.

After taking inspiration from the likes of Neil Armstrong as a youngster, Mr Thomas started his professional career as a senior member of the technical staff at the Bell Laboratory's Engineering Research Center in Princeton, New Jersey.

From there he joined Lockheed Sciences and Engineering in Houston, TX as an engineer working on the space shuttle programme, before being selected as a mission specialist astronaut in NASA's 13th group of astronauts in 1990. He is a veteran of four missions, three aboard Columbia and one aboard Discovery.

Don, who was born in Cleveland, Ohio, has travelled 17.6 million miles and he landed at an event organised by Walsall Rotary Club, held at Calderfields Golf Club on Aldridge Road, to give a talk to the next generation of scientists, engineers and explorers detailing his life and work.

He now works as the director of the Hackerman Academy of Mathematics and Science at Towson University.

The event in Walsall was packed with inquisitive minds young and old who had gathered to hear the incredible tale that only Mr Thomas himself can tell.

Elisha Swindon, events manager at Calderfields Golf Club, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome Mr Thomas to our venue, the popularity of his event was clear to see from how many people came through our doors."

Mr Thomas is the author of Orbit of Discovery, written about his STS-70 mission aboard space shuttle Discovery. A week before the launch of Discovery, a single woodpecker made 205 holes in the soft foam insulation covering the huge external fuel tank of the Shuttle

Action call for backing over threat to library

RESIDENTS have been called on to help save New Invention Library by a community group determined to see the facility remain open in some capacity. New Invention Library is one of nine to close across the borough after Walsall Council budget plans were given the go-ahead at a meeting earlier this month.

Members of the New Invention Community Forum have said they are 'very concerned' about the impact the closure of the library, which is set to go ahead in June, will have on businesses and residents.

They are now asking for anyone interested in helping to make the library community run to come forward.

Wendy Evans, chair of New Invention Community Forum, said: "We have had an encouraging response so far from the council and local councillors to our ideas and we now need the local community to come forward and tell us their ideas.

"Other areas in Walsall have these kind of facilities and there is no reason why we can't do the same here at New Invention if enough people come forward with their ideas and offers to support us. This is a vital time for New Invention and we need the community to come forward to help us."

The forum is working closely with the council to develop proposals on a rescue plan for the Library and Resource Centre which could see an extended range of activities and services for the local community from the centre which it wants to see become a 'Community Hive'.

Transfer secured for 'poor' CCTV

WALSALL Council bosses have agreed to transfer its CCTV operation over to Centro in a move which will secure much-needed upgrades to the 'poor' and 'outdated' system.

An internal review into the authority's 90 fixed cameras and 26 mobile cameras, found the system still had 'obsolete' equipment which would cost a fortune to repair. While lighting issues around the cameras, inadequate staffing levels and cameras in the wrong position were among other problems highlighted.

Cabinet members agreed for CCTV to be transferred over to Centro – now the West Midlands Combined Authority's Transport for West Midlands' (TfWM) arm – from June 30 in a seven-year agreement.

Stained glass sun catcher sessions

CHILDREN can have a go at making their own stained glass-effect sun catcher during a craft session on April 11. Rob Conway will be running the Window Wonders drop-in workshops at Walsall Leather Museum.

The sessions run from 10.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 3.30pm.

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Watchdog in call to school on exclusion rate levels

A SCHOOL with hundreds of pupils has been told by an education watchdog to address high exclusion rates for 'disadvantaged pupils' as well as bullying issues.

Standards have fallen across the board at Leighswood School in Aldridge in the last five years.

The school at Broadmeadow has now been told it 'requires improvement' in almost every area, following an inspection last month, whereas it was Good in all categories in 2012.

Criticism was levied at the behaviour in the school which caters for 615 pupils. The watchdog's report said: "The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Exclusion rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not reducing at a fast enough rate.

"Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour are recorded. Records clearly show the actions that the school takes to deal with incidents and how parents are informed."

Accurate

A fall in teaching standards was also noted. Ofsted said: "Leaders have not maintained the good teaching seen at the last inspection or raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve."

Despite falling standards inspectors highlighted numerous positive aspects at Leighswood.

Early Years Provision was the one area rated 'Good' with Ofsted stating "The early years leader has an accurate view of the issues that need addressing and has put in place effective actions to make sure that children make good progress."

School bosses were also credited with having "the capacity to improve the school".

On behalf of the school a spokeswoman from Walsall Council Children's Services stated: "The council is working in partnership with Leighswood School to address the issues highlighted in the Ofsted report"

Lucky escape for M6 teen driver

PARAMEDICS have said that a teenage driver of a van who suffered minor injuries despite huge damage to his vehicle after a crash on the M6, was 'so, so lucky'. The crash happened last Tuesday at about 9.45pm, on the southbound carriageway just before junction 10a, the M54.

An ambulance service spokesman said: "On arrival, ambulance staff found a blue van that was embedded under the rear of an articulated lorry. Due to the level of damage, it took firefighters an hour to cut away enough of the van to allow the two people inside the van to get out."

The 18-year-old driving, from Warwickshire, escaped with only a broken left wrist. His sister, aged eight, escaped uninjured.

Rose on the run to boost numbers

Rose Langley, seen in training

AN accountant from Shelfield is set to take part in six races across six months, in aid of the Newlife charity for disabled children. Rose Langley, who works at Cannock-based Briggs Equipment will be clocking up almost 60 kilometres in total, and the firm has pledged to match funds that she manages to raise.

Rose Langley, an accounts sssistant with Briggs for the past four years, started running as a way to get fit, but after Briggs nominated Newlife as its charity of the year for 2017, she decided to get involved in fundraising and help raise awareness of the charity at the same time.

The first race Rose is tackling is the Simplyhealth Great Birmingham 10k Run on April 30 – followed by events in May, June, July, August and finishing with the Decathlon 5k at Sandwell Valley on October 7. Rose hopes to raise £500 herself from sponsorship across all six races, which would then be matched by Briggs to bring the total to £1,000.

Rose said: "Being able to raise £1,000 for Newlife would be fantastic. I'm feeling confident, I'm doing a lot of training and running 5-6k is now easily manageable.

"Any child and their family might need help from Newlife at any point and as a new mum to Scarlett who is 18-months-old, the work Newlife does now feels much closer to home – I can imagine myself in their shoes. If I can help a family or a little one then I will. Initially I was only going to run in one event to help fundraise, but I want to help as much as possible.""

To support Rose's efforts, donate at https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Rosemary-Langley

School told to tackle number of exclusions

A STRUGGLING school has been told to reduce the number of 'disadvantaged pupils' being expelled and tackle bullying.

Standards have fallen across the board at Leighswood School in Aldridge in the last five years.

The school at Broadmeadow has now been told it 'requires improvement' in almost every area, following an inspection last month, whereas it was 'good' in all categories in 2012.

Criticism was levied at the behaviour in the school which caters for 615 pupils.

The watchdog's report said: "The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Exclusion rates for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not reducing at a fast enough rate.

"Incidents of bullying and inappropriate behaviour are recorded. Records clearly show the actions that the school takes to deal with incidents and how parents are informed. However, although school leaders monitor behaviour over time, they do not evaluate this information effectively enough."

Expectations

A fall in teaching standards was also noted.

Ofsted said: "Leaders have not maintained the good teaching seen at the last inspection or raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is not yet a drive to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress."

Despite falling standards inspectors highlighted numerous positive aspects at Leighswood. Early Years Provision was the one area rated 'Good' with Ofsted stating: "The early years leader has an accurate view of the issues that need addressing and has put in place effective actions to make sure that children make good progress."

School bosses were also credited with having 'the capacity to improve the school'.

And despite behaviour concerns the watchdog declared general pupil welfare was in good shape with the school promoting students' 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well'.

On behalf of the school a spokeswoman from Walsall Council Children's Services stated: "The council is working in partnership with Leighswood School to address the issues highlighted in the Ofsted report. Our specialist education staff are working closely with the school to deliver a measurable improvement plan."

Drama from the streets on stage

Members of the cast for the Goldmine Centre production performing the homelessness play ' Harper'

TEENAGERS are taking to the stage in an amateur production highlighting homelessnesses among young people. Harper features a cast of almost 80 16-18 year olds who have spent the last 12 weeks preparing for the show.

The core cast is made up of students on the BTEC extended diploma course at the Goldmine Centre in Walsall.

All students get a taste of the real workings of a live stage show, while studying for a qualification.

Joseph Bradley, both student and marketing manager for the production, said: "We have a real working set up. We have a costume manager, prop manager, marketing manager and many more separate roles so hopefully it will all result in a really good evening for the audience."

Walsall Studio School set up in 2014 and shows four shows each year, with two larger productions.

Mr Bradley added: "The production taking place is called Harper, it's set in London in the 1960s. It was written by our production team and focuses on squatters and their rights during the housing crisis."

Two full days of rehearsals have been ongoing since the start of the year and tonight, Thursday, is the final performance, with tickets available in person at the centre or by calling 01922 621 951.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Traffic-calming proves a success

THE installation of a £10,000 traffic-calming scheme has had the desired effect, according to a community leader. The Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield Area Partnership will meet on Monday to discuss the latest issues across the areas.

Plans to install a £10,000 traffic calming project to tackle anti-social behaviour in Northfields Way, Clayhanger, Brownhills were given the go-ahead back in October after residents expressed their frustration at noisy and speeding vehicles, illegal parking and more.

Back to the sixties for sell-out crowd

A SELL-OUT crowd enjoyed a special sixties night at which took place at a Burntwood club in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice.

The event at Grangemoor Working Men's Club was organised by Burntwood Lions and featured The Fabulous Foottappers, a nine-piece band of musicians and singers who formed four years ago to support local charities.

During the interval, Mike Simms, fundraising chairman for the Lions club, presented a cheque for £1,000 to Tanya Fellows from the hospice.

Region's record high for houses

PROPERTY going on the market rose by 2.1 per cent in the West Midlands to a record high over the last month, according to Rightmove's latest house price index.

It was ahead of the national average increase of 1.3 per cent or £3,877.

Growth over the last year has been 4.2 per cent in the region and 2.3 per cent across the UK. The average house price for the West Midlands was £212,798 – up £4,321 on the month and £8,658 on the year.

Co-op store back open after revamp

A CO-OP store has reopened up in Great Barr following a makeover. The store, located on Dyas Road, was unveiled during a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It has been given a £284,000 makeover to provide customers with an improved shopping experience.

The shop has been fitted with the latest in pioneering energy-efficient refrigeration and LED lighting technologies to minimise environmental impact. Its opening times are 7am to 9pm, Monday to Sunday.

Slade event at venue

A CONVENTION for Slade fans will be held in Bilston this spring. The event, at The Robin 2, is on all-day celebrating the Black Country glam idols.

It is set to begin at midday on Sunday May 28. Tickets cost £16 in advance and £18 on the door.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Abiding image of bravery and kindness

POLITICIANS and police officers sometimes get a rough ride in the media, and rightly so. Indeed for a columnist, making fun of MPs and over-zealous authority figures is meat and drink.

This is a sign of living in a healthy democracy, and for the most part I believe they are self-aware enough to know it goes with the territory. If you put yourself into a position of authority, you can expect to feel the brickbats.

However, this week things seem different. The sight of the previously little-known Foreign Office minister Tobias Ellwood unsuccessfully trying to save the life of a police officer stabbed in the line of duty puts everything in a different context. And , along with all the un-named doctors, nurses, paramedics and other good citizens who ran towards the danger while others were running away, it is a poignant symbol of how terror attacks, such as the one in London last week, are always doomed to fail.

While Islamic State posts sick internet posts "claiming responsibility" for the actions of its "soldier", the abiding image around the world is one of bravery and kindness, real heroes helping others with no thought for their own safety.

Adrian Elms, Khalid Masood, whatever he calls himself, could not have scored a bigger own-goal for his cause if he tried.

❒❒❒

HAVE you ever made a donation through the website Justgiving.com? If so, you probably, like me, did so believing that all the money you donated went to charity.

In fact, one thing to emerge from the fund set up in memory of PC Keith Palmer is that the company which owns the Justgiving website rakes off five per cent commission. And if you tick the Gift Aid box, where the Government refunds the equivalent amount of income tax that the donor would have paid, Justgiving takes five per cent of that, too.

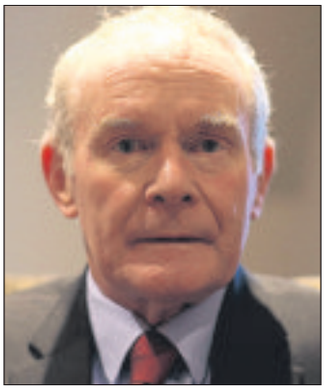
To put this into context, five per cent is the same commission rate that Betfair charges on its betting exchange. Except that the online bookmaker makes no pretence of being anything other than a commercial business out to maximise profits.

Now, of course, nobody should be expected to work for nothing, and running a website inevitably incurs some administration costs. But five per cent? Last year Justgiving made a profit of £2 million, and spent £10 million on staff costs Its directors, technicians, sales and administration staff earn, on average, more than £60,000 a year, while the head of the firm received a pay package of £198,000. All coming out of donations from the public.

I think I will be just giving directly to charities in future.

Shock over report on extraction of baby teeth

Mary Berry – toffee pudding unleashed on an unsuspecting nation . . . yum!



Martin McGuinness – Government said it never negotiated with terrorists

Dame Vera Lynn – singer's centenary will doubtless be excuse for yet more concerts

It's adults who are to blame not sugar

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

"SO sugar's to blame," an enthusiastic radio reporter declared during a report on the shocking news that extractions of baby teeth have risen by 24 per cent. No, sugar's not to blame. Adults are to blame.

THESE days, there is scarcely a telly programme that doesn't come with some sort of warning that it may contain sexual incidents, extreme violence, distressing scenes or flashing lights which could cause epileptic attacks. And yet Mary Berry's sticky toffee pudding was unleashed on an unsuspecting nation this week, without a word of warning. More, more, I want more. . . As Mary takes flak from viewers for making the sticky pudding without dates and cooking a pie without a pastry base, one Tweeter noted: "She didn't use real rats in her ratatouille."

WELL done, DameVera Lynn, on reaching 100. The singer's centenary will doubtless be an excuse for yet more concerts in which people will dress up in uniforms they are not entitled to wear, sing songs they can't begin to understand and perpetuate the myth that the Second World War, far from being all bad, was a jolly sort of musical event. The rest of Europe, watching the Brits still singing about hanging out the washing on the Siegfried Line, can only despair.

THE death of Ireland's 'man of peace' Martin McGuinness is a reminder of the gulf between what Whitehall says and what it does. The official line has always been: we never negotiate with terrorists. And yet the Government was secretly talking to McGuinness and his IRA cronies as early as the 1970s, but denied it for years. The Government's true position is as follows: we never negotiate with terrorists – unless we can.

MORE names for emulsion paints that tell you absolutely nothing about the colour. Our local DIY shop is now stocking Wellbeing and Urban Mystery.

I HAVE just trudged to the Post Office to pay the outstanding postage on a delivery from eBay. The firm advertised "fast and free delivery." It's certainly free if you don't put a stamp on it.

A COUPLE of readers have consulted their dictionaries to discover that "diarise," a word I scoffed at recently, actually exists. I will make three points. 1) If you need to use a dictionary to find it, then it's not a proper word; 2) My dictionary describes it as archaic; and 3) After 47 years in a profession which lives, breathes and exists around diaries, I've never heard it. Nonetheless, "diarise" does exist and I have takenonboardarised your comments.

THE European Court of Justice has ruled that employers are entitled to ban staff from wearing "visible religious symbols," a move condemned by some Muslims as a direct attack on women wearing hijabs at work. I can't see it happening in Britain. How could any company ban the hijab in the office when the woman wearing it may have come to work on a bus driven by a turban-wearing Sikh? The intriguing social development is that while the number of young Sikh men wearing turbans is declining, the number of young Muslim women wearing headscarves is increasing. Why would that be?

POLITICAL correctness strikes in Westminster where Roger Gale MP was castigated for calling his office staff "girls." As we should all know by now, calling women girls both infantilises and degrades them, making them appear the playthings and possessions of the outdated patriarchy which controls our society and all that stuff. I always feel sorry for women who object to this word, for presumably they never have a night out with the girls.

AS the education cuts bite, some schools are abandoning German lessons. It is sad although, as a colleague who endured five years of German once told me: "German is a useful language but has too many fahrts to be taken seriously".

IF we had known then what we know now. What odds do you think the bookies would have offered you in the 1970s on Chuck Berry living to be 90?

I WAS buying a widget from an online store I have used many times. But this time it wanted to know whether I was a new or existing customer. As soon as it twigged I had shopped there earlier, it demanded my password which I have, of course, long forgotten. So the system emailed me a new password. But the moment I tried to use it, up came the message: "This connection is not secure. Logins entered here could be compromised." Well done, the geeks. They have scared off another customer.

I HAD a Freemasonish sort of moment, reading the many comments on George Osborne becoming editor of London's Evening Standard, posted on the journalists' website, Hold the Front Page. One comment consisted of four squiggles in Teeline. It was a pungent and obscene invitation to go away, George. It could be read only by the dwindling band of us who still use shorthand.

TALKING POINT

Youngsters need to look back in wonder

OLD age creeps up on us all, but as for all this hogwash about 70 being the new 40? Do me a favour.

Having passed the half century mark, with the wrinkles, receding hair and expanding waistline, to show for it, I am quite happy to admit I'm past it.

I wish people would stop trying to maintain their youth with ridiculous fitness regimes, skin treatments and clothes shopping from a 25-year-old's perspective.

Older folk are supposed to have no idea what is going on in 'the charts' if they are still called that! I wouldn't even know if I could still go into a 'record shop' and buy something which is in the, what we would term as 'hit parade!'

Popular culture is thrown around as something us oldies should have some kind of knowledge about and we do try, honest, despite the smirks from our younger relatives – but just wait one minute, that works both ways baby...

How many times do we hear from the mouths of babes – the Beatles? Nah, I think they're rubbish, besides, my musical journey started with S Club 7...

Oh yeah? Well perhaps when the music of Lennon and McCartney is actually on the school curriculum today's youngsters, who might be in their 40s and parents themselves by then, will rue the time when they snubbed the greatest popular songwriters in history.

Yes I know it's a cloak of youth to wear to show that they aren't into what their mums, dads and grandparents are into, but I think you find out about life as much looking backwards as forwards and this is, in a nutshell, the problem we have as we face a post-Brexit Britain, or should that be England, and whoever else is left.

The next generation will be completely future-biased, if they aren't already. Nostalgia-yearning-syndrome may by then be a recognised psychological disorder and sufferers will be locked away in plush white rooms with virtual reality gear, forced into playing the latest life-changing 'video game', or whatever they are called these days – sorry!

I only hope that children I see around me loosen up a little bit as they get older as getting my oldest lad to even consider the possibility of partaking in an alcoholic beverage seems less likely than Glenn Miller's remains being found buried under the Great Wall of China. I can remember that by the age of 12, I was being ushered into the backs of pubs, having my first taste of at least shandy.

Everything these days seems so strait-laced for youngsters, or is it youngsters seem so strait-laced? We need another punk revolution, perhaps it's time for us over-50s to dig out the safety-pin leather jackets and spike up what's left of our hair, start doing a bit of pogo-ing, to get them in the mood for a bit of anarchy. Better be careful of our dodgy backs though...

GRAEME ANDREW

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Tory leadership is a real shambles

WHAT a political and economic shambles the Tories really are.

They instructed New Labour to deregulate the banking industry, with devastating consequences, then blamed their colleagues for incompetence.

For six years we had to put up with Cameron and Osborne, with their austerity programme in which national debt actually soared beyond control.

Then they placated those opposed to the EU by promising to hold a referendum if re-elected.

To their great shock and disbelief, the vote was for Brexit, forcing them to resign and become nonentities once more.

Now we have the spectacle of an unelected prime minister laughing like a hyena at a man who has won two leadership contests.

Sitting alongside her, a chancellor also guffawing, as he announces his economic policies, only to retract them a week later, after discovering they are unpopular and a sure vote loser.

MR T R MILLWARD
Chasetown

UKIP really in disarray

THE political commentator Chris Moncrieff exposes the chaotic disintegration of UKIP. Douglas Carswell, a Tory defector and who was their only MP, faces a challenge for his Clacton seat by Arron Banks, their wealthy backer. .

Just weeks ago they were claiming Labour were finished and they would replace it as the party of the working class. But with no trade union links, they rely on bankers to keep them afloat.

Nigel Farage, a wealthy financier, liked to be portrayed as someone the common folk could readily identify with. But now he is most likely to distance himself from his bickering bunch in an attempt to protect his ego.

PHILLIP BRYANT
Burntwood

It's time to make art more open

IT was refreshing to read T Redley's letter in your paper on March 11 praising Wolverhampton Art Gallery for the part it was playing in encouraging local schools to take an interest in art.

I wrote to Walsall's New Art Gallery and the council on March 20 urging them to engage with Walsall schools and Walsall citizens in order to involve them in art and the gallery.

I didn't get an answer from either.

Only when I wrote to the Express and Star saying that the New Art Gallery would be closed unless they made themselves accessible to a broader range of Walsall people, did I feel that things might change.

I hear that they are beginning to make an effort.

I looked up Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the first thing I read was 'Discover inspiring venues, stunning art and activities to entertain the whole family'.

Take a leaf out of their book Walsall and you will receive praise from people like T Redley and me.

ROGER WATTS
Walsall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
walsall.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Claims on Brexiters' make-up are refuted

IN apparent response to an earlier letter of mine, J Greensill, refers to Michael Faraday as having only basic education (Letters 16 March).

Faraday, like Brunel, Stephenson, Watt and many other great engineers of the 18th and 19th centuries had only a basic education because a degree in those disciplines did not then exist.

Greensill also claims that I "said the people who were well-educated voted stay… and the ones that voted out were uneducated". No. This is a grotesque over-simplification, and it is not a matter of what I "said". Demographic correlations are not absolute. Pensioners and Midlanders were more likely to vote to leave the EU. I'm a pensioner and a Midlander, and voted to remain. That doesn't disprove the general correlation.

Neither would the fact that a minority of people with higher degrees voted to leave disprove the general correlation between level of education and voting to leave or remain.

That correlation is not my assertion or opinion.

ALAN T HARRISON
Walsall

It's a dirty job, but . . .

YOUR report on the 'Tough Mudders' office workers who like to knock themselves out in grim outdoor challenges and adverse conditions, was great. Us outdoor workers who find it more of a challenge avoiding cold water, mud and sore muscles salute them.

As I have an especial dislike for heatwaves I would rise to any challenge which involved sitting in a shady office, wearing a cool cotton shirt and with nothing to sustain me but air conditioning, fans and an endless supply of chilled water.

MR L B JACKSON
Willenhall

Congratulations to 'Missy'

TODAY, March 18, 'Missy Bates' celebrated her 90th birthday. Remembered as the much-loved and respected head of the Red House School Nursery unit for so many years, she, with so much care and dedication, contributed to the lives of hundreds of people of Aldridge, all those years ago.

Thanks to all her neighbours, friends and the staff of the Crown, where Margaret enjoyed a celebration lunch, for the cards and flowers, making such an enjoyable day.

RAY HAMMOND
Aldridge

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

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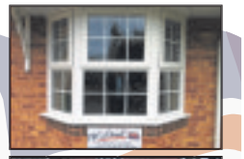
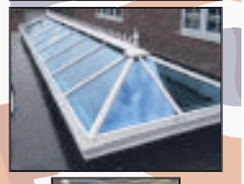

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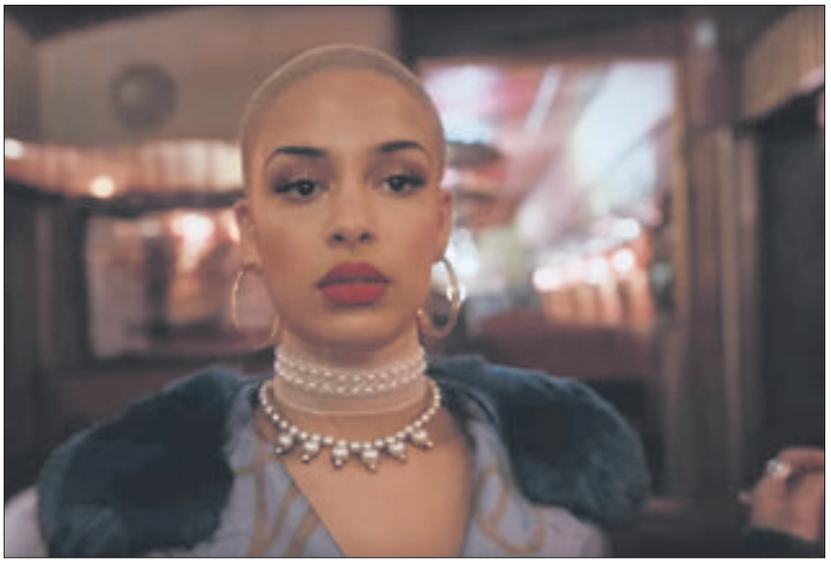
Jorja gets along swimmingly with Drake



A screenshot from the Beautiful Little Fools video from singer Jorja Smith, produced in conjunction with VEVO

MUSICIAN Jorja Smith from Walsall is among the British stars to appear on the latest of album of one of the world's biggest figures in popular music.

Canadian rapper Drake, released his latest project More Life on Saturday, and 19-year-old Jorja – who worked in Starbucks a year ago – sings on track Get It Together. The 'playlist' album received almost 90 million plays in it's first 24 hours since release, according to reports.

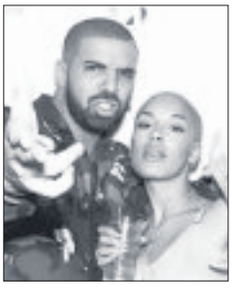
And last Monday night, Drake, aka Drizzy, introduced her on stage at the prestigious London O2 Arena. It comes after she sang with him at his show in Birmingham and the two were spotted in a Co-op supermarket in Broadway last month. The track, Get It Together – samples DJ Black Coffee's original track Superman. Drake also posted a photo of the two artist's together on his Instagram page. In a previous interview with the Express & Star, Jorja reflected on her childhood in Walsall and referenced the number four bus that she used to catch.

She said: "Both my parents have been big influences on me wanting to do music. My mum's always been, 'just do it. Just sing'"

Earlier this month, Jorja Smith released her latest music video Beautiful Little Fools, which coincided with International Women's Day. The video was produced in collaboration with streaming service Vevo on YouTube.

She recently announced a six-date tour, which will be starting at the O2 Academy 2 in Birmingham on April 1.

Follow her on Twitter at @JorjaSmith or search her on Facebook



Drake and Jorja on Instagram

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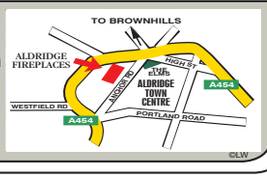

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Chef Martin's in the mix for title hopes

Left, Simon Lawrence – Avery Group culinary manager, with Martin McKee, who is the head chef at Hawthorns

MARTIN McKee, Head Chef at The Hawthorns in Aldridge is proving he has a real appetite for success.

For the second year running, Martin has successfully won the Midlands Region Care Chef Final held by the National Association of Care Catering, as he competes for the coveted title of NACC Care Chef of the Year 2017.

Martin had 90 minutes to prepare a nutritionally-balanced two course menu of a main and dessert that would be suitable for senior diners. For his main dish, Martin prepared a mouth-watering pan-seared hake, accompanied with cauliflower and parmesan puree, goose-fat fondant potato and pea and mint coulis.

For dessert, he prepared an exquisite soft toffee apple with walnut and oat shortbread and an orange glaze.

The two highest-scoring competitors from the regional, including Martin, have now secured a place in the National Finals which will take place in June.

Prior to joining The Hawthorns, Martin trained in award-winning restaurants in his native Scotland before becoming Head Chef at the Apley Estate in Bridgnorth. He then relocated to Aldridge with his wife and their son, and now leads the fine dining experience at the luxurious retirement community.

Violent crimes on increase to one a day

THERE is more than one violent or sexual crime in Bloxwich a day with residents 'afraid to leave their homes' at night.

By Carl Jackson

Latest police figures reveal that between February 2016 and January this year there were 427 reports under the category, which broadly covers 'attacks against other people'.

It is the second most common crime in the town, behind anti-social behaviour, and accounts for more than 18 per cent of all incidents police have had to deal with in the time period.

Walsall mayor Kath Phillips, who has been a magistrate for more than 30 years, said: "I have been a magistrate for 34 years and it used to be a case of people not paying their TV licence or not paying for a bottle of milk.

"I think part of the problem is that a blind eye is turned to what's going on.

"It has been the case for a few years now that people have been afraid to leave their own homes at night, particularly elderly people."

Councillor Phillips said the problems were not helped by dwindling numbers of police officers on the streets. She added: "The deterrent has gone. There aren't enough bobbies on the street now. But the force is doing as good a job as humanly possible. It is for the Government to give us more money for the officers."

Fellow Bloxwich councillor Louise Harrison added: "This certainly needs looking into further whether it is more related to domestic violence, which is quite prominent in Walsall at the moment, or if it is linked to the pubs in Bloxwich."

The number of cases of violence and sexual crime peaked in October last year at 49 in the month, according to the police figures, before falling to 25 in November. The number of incidents rose to more than one a day in January, with 35 recorded.

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Flexibility key to Jennifer Ashe & Son's professional approach

Commercial feature

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Jennifer, son John and head funeral director and son-in-law Richard have been on hand to offer advice and support at what is for many a very traumatic time.

Funerals can be a massive expense and for those who have not planned ahead, they leave their loved ones often struggling to find the money to pay for the funeral expenses.

Jennifer, John and Richard were determined when they opened that they would not charge expensive rates for their professional services.

The frontage of the Jennifer Ashe & Son funeral director's premises in Brownhills

Obituaries

With this in mind Jennifer Ashe & Son's funeral prices start at just £950 for its Silver Package, £1450 for the Gold Package and £1950 for the Platinum Package, (excluding 3rd party fees).

Funeral payments are broken down into two areas, the third party costs, such as crematorium, church, doctors, and minister's fees, and extra's like floral tributes and obituaries. The second part is the funeral director's fees for the work they carry out.

Whilst they can't change the third party fees Jennifer Ashe & Son are passionate about offering affordable funerals without compromising on standard of care or the funeral itself.

Some funeral directors have one set fee for their funeral packages, however, after doing its own research, the firm found that this doesn't work for some families, they may not want the limousine that is built into the package they're being offered, or there may be flowers factored into the plan when in fact the family have their own florist that they want to use.

Head funeral director, Richard

Most recently Jennifer Ashe & Son has also introduced an 'all inclusive package' priced at just £2600 for everything, from the funeral director's fees right through to the cremation costs, orders of service, and other finishing touches that mean families don't have to worry about the finer details.

In line with its commitment to being open and transparent all the firm's prices are published in the 'Our Prices' section of the 'Arranging a Funeral' page on its website: www.jafunerals.co.uk.

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Watchdog in call for nursery improvements

A WALSALL nursery has been told to improve after failings were uncovered by the education watchdog.

In a damning report, inspectors claimed staff at Banana Moon Day Nursery were concentrating on 'completing paperwork instead of engaging and interacting with children'.

Ofsted has rated the Ida Road nursery as requires improvement, describing teaching as 'variable' and stating that staff don't manage mealtimes efficiently enough.

According to the report, compiled after an inspection in February, a lack of observations and assessments meant that children at the nursery are 'not supported to make the best possible progress'.

The nursery currently has 31 children on its books. Inspector Amanda Tompkin said: "Staff do not gather enough information about children's existing skills and development when they first start at the nursery.

"At times, staff concentrate on domestic tasks and completing paperwork instead of engaging and interacting with children.

Sitting

"Weaknesses within the use of observations and assessments mean that children are not supported to make the best possible progress. Mealtimes are not organised effectively which results in children sitting for a length of time before the food arrives and then waiting for serving dishes containing parts of their meal to be passed from other tables."

The inspection is the nursery's first, as it was registered last year.

It currently employs 10 members of staff and supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The Ofsted report rates the nursery as requires improvement in terms of effectiveness of leadership, quality of teaching, personal development and outcomes for children.

Positive points were also raised by inspectors, including the fact that communication skills were worked on properly and that parents had said they are happy with the service provided.

Ms Tompkin said: "Staff in the baby room model children's emerging speech effectively." The nursery was unavailable for comment.

Poundland puts 99p Stores in administration

Most 99p Stores, like this one in Dudley High Street, have converted to Poundlands. But 60 have shut and the old company put in administration

POUNDLAND has put the old 99p Stores business into administration after closing around 60 stores.

The Willenhall-based £1-for-everything business bought the rival budget chain in a £55 million deal 18 months ago.

Most of the 250 99p Stores have been converted to Poundlands but 60 stores were left over. They were all closed down in the first three months of this year and nearly all the staff have transferred to nearby Poundland branches.

The separate 99p Stores company has now been placed in administration with Alix Partners, who will handle the company and its liabilities.

The 99p Stores takeover was delayed for months by a competition watchdog investigation that finally found no cause for concern. But the hang-up resulted in substantial additional costs for Poundland when it came to absorbing the business and converting its shops.

It tried to speed it up but the cost of the takeover punched a big hole in Poundland's 2016 profits. And it left Poundland vulnerable to a takeover bid by South African retail group Steinhoff , which paid £610 million for it last year.

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Mon 17 Apr	5	Rhine & Moselle Inclusive	£259
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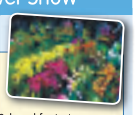

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No-seatbelt fines dished out

MORE than 230 motorists were fined for not wearing their seatbelt during a week-long police crackdown in the region.

Officers handed out £100 fines and warned about the dangers of not belting up as part of an awareness campaign between March 13 and 19. Excuses from drivers included one who claimed he did not believe a seatbelt was required while travelling at 25mph or under. A total of 236 motorists were fined across the West Midlands including parents who had young children in their vehicle. The mother of a 12-year-old boy, who died in a car crash while not wearing a seatbelt, joined officers at the roadside to warn drivers of the potentially fatal consequences of not belting up.

Inspector Andy Bentley from Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG), which is made up of officers from West Midlands, Staffordshire and West Mercia police forces, said: "It has been law to wear a seatbelt for over 30 years and it is disappointing to see people are still ignoring this."

Help for victims of dog attacks costs £125,000

THERE have been nearly 60 dog attacks in Walsall in four years costing the health system more than £125,000 to deal with, figures have revealed.

A Freedom of Information request to Walsall Manor Hospital showed there has been an average of 15 incidents a year - more than one a month. Out of 58 patients admitted between 2013 and 2016 due to 'bites' or 'attacks' from dogs, 39 of them required surgery. The total bill to treat victims in the period came to £125,137.

West Midlands Police has stated that a decision to prosecute the owner of a 'dangerous' dog is often based on the 'public interest' around the case.

Force Dog Unit Manager, Inspector Russ Evans, said: "Under the current legislation any dog (of any breed or type) can be considered dangerous in any place if it is not kept under control.

"The dog doesn't have to bite anyone; it could just show aggressive behaviour that makes someone feel in fear for their safety. In these cases, the police may prosecute and the penalties can be severe, but we will always be guided by the public interest, the evidence available and the wishes of the victim.

"If a dog causes a minor injury to someone known to its owner – maybe a friend or relative and they do not wish to formally complain – it may not be in the public interest to pursue a prosecution, even though an offence has technically been committed.

Notorious

"We can also use community resolutions to resolve low level offences or push for conditions around responsible dog ownership – like dogs being kept on a lead or muzzled when in public – through the civil court."

The hospital figures showed there were 12 patients treated last year, 10 in 2015, 25 in 2014 and 11 in 2013. None of the attacks proved to be fatal.

There have been some notorious incidents in the borough in the last few years.

A dangerous rottweiler and Japanese akita-cross mauled a seven-year-old boy puncturing his hand in August before the same dog attacked a postman less than a fortnight later biting him in the groin. A judge avoided ruling for it to be destroyed imposing strict conditions on the owner including muzzling the animal.

Shock as litter pick pupils find needles

Teacher Jade Greenwood with Ismaaeel Iqba, 10, and Farhana Uddin, nine, collect rubbish in the underpass

IT was supposed to a be a study on 'Our wonderful world' but what pupils found during a rubbish collection for the project left them far from enchanted by their surroundings.

Year 5 students at North Walsall Primary Academy were 'disgusted' to come across needles and broken glass near to their school gate while further litter and trash was found at a troublesome underpass nearby.

The youngsters had initially hoped to use some of their findings in artwork for the project but instead they have now chosen to write to Walsall Council calling for action to clean up their area.

Their teacher Jade Greenwood said: "When walking around the school, the children collected the rubbish. But much of the rubbish was dangerous. They found glass and needles right next to our school gate. The children were so disgusted about the mess and how dangerous the area was that they are writing letters to the Mayor of Walsall."

Headteacher Lisa Chambers added: "The school topic was 'Our Wonderful World' as and as part of it they did a perimeter litter pick. They were going to use some of the stuff for artwork but they were so disappointed with what they found they didn't want to do art anymore, they just wanted to write to the council for them to say what they are doing about it."

College in apprentices move

WALSALL College has been given approval to provide apprenticeship training to employers after being included on a Government list. The college has been included on a new government Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers, which lists providers that will be eligible to deliver apprenticeships from May 2017.

To be included on the register, the college underwent a rigorous assessment process to make sure they meet quality expectations. Over 2000 applications were submitted and only 1,708 were successful.

James Norris, of Walsall College, said: "We are delighted to have been included on this national register in recognition of our apprenticeship provision.

"We are committed to delivering outstanding training tailored to meet employers' needs and enable individuals to progress in their careers. We work in close partnership with businesses and apprentices, to match the right candidates with the right vacancies and help ensure they go on to become valued employees within the organisations."

Cameras move in to film vets' best

Vet nurse of the year hopeful, Nicky Smith being fitted with a microphone before filming at the Great Wyrley premises

STAFF at 387 Veterinary Centre in Great Wyrley were delighted to welcome Create4media at the practice as the team were being filmed as finalists for the national Petplan Awards 2017. The Walsall Road practice has been shortlisted as one of three finalists in the Practice of the Year category. Receptionist Joanne Civil and Head Nurse Nicky Smith are also finalists in the Support Staff of the Year and Vet Nurse of the Year categories respectively.

Winners will be announced at a prestigious Petplan Awards Gala evening on Thursday, at Birmingham Town Hall. "It's an unbelievable achievement," said 387 Vets' Clinical Director Hamish Duncan, "as the Petplan Awards are really seen as the one to win in the vet world.

"Considering how many practices and staff are entered each year, we are slightly stunned but incredibly excited to be one of three finalists in not just one, but three of the six award categories."

The awards, often described as the Oscars of the veterinary world, are based on clients and staff nominating individuals or a team and sharing how their nominee has gone over and above the call of duty in their daily work.

Brantano collapse puts 1000 jobs at risk

FOOTWEAR retailer Brantano has collapsed into administration, putting more than a thousand jobs at risk.

It operates around a dozen branches across the West Midlands that could now be under threat. The group, owned by private equity firm Alteri, has struggled following the Brexit-induced collapse in the value of the pound.

By Simon Penfold

It has also experienced difficult trading conditions.

The falling pound has made it more expensive for retailers to import goods such as shoes from abroad.

Administrator PwC said redundancies would be 'inevitable'. Brantano operates 73 stores and 64 concessions across Britain, employing 1,086 staff. Locally the chain has branches at the Crown Wharf Shopping Park in Walsall, and the Oldbury Green Retail Park. There are also outlets in several garden centres in the region.

PwC said that despite "sustained efforts and streamlining" to make the business more commercially viable a attempt to sell Brantano had been unsuccessful. As a result, the firm has been placed into administration. Tony Barrell, lead administrator at PwC, said: "Despite significant improvements in the business and reductions in the cost base, trading has continued to suffer in a depressed and competitive footwear market."

PwC will continue to trade the business while 'assessing the trading strategy and any interest in parts of the business over the coming days and weeks'.

It has been reported Shoe Zone and Edinburgh Woollen Mill, the retail group run by the billionaire Philip Day, have expressed an interest in parts of the business.

Brantano was originally founded in Belgium in 1953 and expanded into the UK by buying 47 Shoe City shops in 1998.

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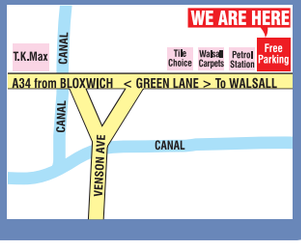

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Credit card spree ends in prison

TWO men have each been jailed for 16 months after going on a spending spree with a stolen credit card belonging to an 88-year-old woman. Her handbag was taken during a burglary of her home in Gloucester Road, Walsall, on February 9, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Less than two hours later Dean Barnes and William Selvey started to use a contactless credit card that had been in the bag, said Miss Fiona Cortese, prosecuting, buying £23 worth of goods from an Asda in Walsall before using it for a further £5.50 purchase at the same store four minutes afterwards. The following day the card bought alcohol valued at £27 at a Shell garage in Walsall but was refused when the two men tried to buy more goods at the nearby Tesco shop because it had been cancelled after being reported stolen, the court heard.

Barnes, aged 39, and 42-year-old Selvey – both prolific criminals with previous convictions for 66 and 128 offences respectively – were recognised by police from CCTV of purchases made with the card. Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said it had been passed on to the two men by a woman they met in a pub.

Barnes, from Bath Street, Caldmore and Selvey, of Conway Close, Flint, North Wales, both admitted handling stolen property and fraud. Judge James Burbidge QC said: "Those who dishonestly receive goods encourage burglars."

Council seeks £1.3m for major roadworks

CONGESTION misery on a busy route through a Black Country town could finally be solved as the council looks to secure funding for multi-million pound improvement works.

Walsall Council wants to tackle the serious congestion issues on the A461 Lichfield Road, which runs from the town centre to the borough's boundary, by widening the roads and installing new traffic signals.

The scheme, which is hoped will increase the capacity on the route, will cost £2.3 million, with the council looking for £1.38m of that funding to come from the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Accessing Growth' fund.

Work will target two locations – the A461 Lichfield Road at the B4152 Salters Road junction together with the A461Lichfield Road at the A452 Chester Road junction.

Direction

Both will be widened, which will increase capacity, enable improved pedestrian facilities, and install new traffic signal and communications technology.

A report from Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership board papers reads: "The A461 Lichfield Road is an arterial route, which runs in a north-easterly direction from Walsall town centre to the borough boundary. It carries large volumes of traffic throughout the day which results in heavy congestion at peak times.

"The A461 Highway Improvement scheme seeks to address the issue of growing congestion and the lack of traffic capacity along this strategic route."

Councillor John Rochelle, who represents the Aldridge Central ward, which will be affected by the work at Chester Road, said: "It is a very busy road and I will be glad to see work done to improve things for motorists.

"If we can secure the money then let's get it done and move forward."

Business ideas challenge

With judge Peter Cadman, are, from left, Vinny Hollander, Jack Honfray and Megan Arns (back) Bonnie Sutton, Lola Fellows, Georgia Friar

HUNDREDS of budding young entrepreneurs from Walsall primary schools teamed up to find the best business ideas in an annual challenge event.

Teams from seven schools – Cooper and Jordan, Leighswood, Whetstone Field, Rushall, Radleys Blackwood, St Michael's – were challenged to produce business ideas and then present them before a panel of judges.

Each team of primary pupils was helped by students from Aldridge School, in Tynings Lane, who acted as business ambassadors.

Aldridge School Primary Challenge was organised by Education Business Services headed up by Lorenzo Cosco and ran over three days. He said: "Each team of primary school pupils had to work with an Aldridge Ambassador and everyone one of them came up with really great presentations – it's a challenge in itself getting up on stage and speaking in front of so many people."

The winning team impressed judges with its innovation, presentation and practical skills including CV writing.

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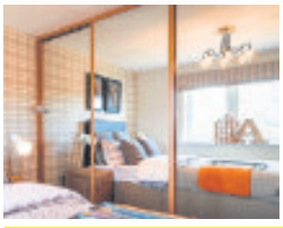

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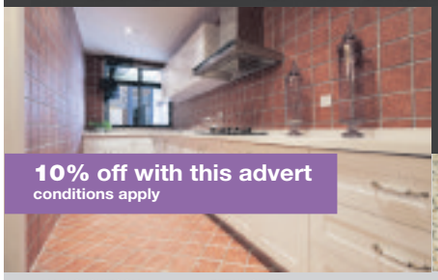

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Man attacked rival in street with 'spanner'

A HARDWARE store owner struck a rival in the face with a weapon after spotting him while driving along a street, a court heard.

Sufraz Khan flew into a rage when he saw the victim walking along the street, getting out of his van and confronting him with what is thought to have been a spanner.

The man was struck in the eye during the attack and his face was badly bruised, a judge was told. The pair had been involved in a feud over money, recorder Jason Widoger said.

Father-of-two Khan, aged 45, who runs a hardware shop in Walsall, was told he was lucky to avoid an immediate prison sentence. He was given a nine month jail term, suspended for two years and will have to carry out 160 hours of unpaid work.

Khan, of Spouthouse Lane, Great Barr, was also ordered to pay £500 in compensation to his victim over the violent attack in June 2014. Recorder Widoger told him at Wolverhampton Crown Court: "Very little of this saga does you any credit at all.

"You saw him, by chance driving down the street, and decided to take your opportunity. You equipped yourself with something, probably a spanner, and you went up to him and struck him once.

"It caused an enormous bruise but by great good fortune it caused no lasting injury to the eye."

The recorder said Khan, who was found guilty of assault occasioning actual bodily harm following a trial in February, deserved to go to prison but decided to suspended his sentence as he was of previous good character and there were concerns his family would struggle to get by without the support of the father.

He added: "He was extremely lucky and you, frankly, are extremely lucky."

Khan's barrister Miss Saleema Mahmood insisted he regretted the attack.

She said: "It was a single blow, one borne out of frustration at events that occurred previously and one Mr Khan sincerely shows remorse for."

Emily snaps up £15k prize

Winner Emily with Nikon's Neil Freeman at the photography show

A YOUNG photographer has been given a £15,000 boost to help kick-start her career after winning a competition in Birmingham. Emily Addis, aged 25, from Sutton Coldfield, was crowned the winner of the 60 Seconds to Change Your Life contest at The Photography Show held at the NEC.

The competition required aspiring photographers to submit a 60-second-long video, describing why they hoped to be considered for the competition and how it would change their life.

Following additional challenges, including the submission of a creative selfie and a task to capture an image around the NEC, the three chosen finalists, Emily Addis, Evie Lewis and Wayne Richards took to the Live Stage at The Photography Show to take part in a live photo shoot in front of a packed audience.

Emily's creative selfie for the contest

Emily said: "I have recently quit my job in retail to follow my aspirations of becoming a professional photographer and taking part in the competition was a case of make or break. I am thrilled!"

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Reminder of home comforts

A well-known war song

Another one from the collection

Word by Jimmy Kennedy

Dame Vera Lynn in her prime

John Sparry has collection of sheet music

Songs which helped nation win two wars

A COLLECTION of rare music and lyrics from some favourite wartime songs is being lovingly preserved.

The collection from the First and Second World Wars has been built up by Wall Heath musician John Sparry over the last 25 years.

Jazz musician Mr Sparry decided to dig out the pristine collection in honour of forces' sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn who celebrated her 100th birthday last week. Songs by Dame Vera in the collection include If I Had My Way and That Lovely Weekend.

Mr Sparry said: "I've been collecting these songs for over 25 years. They're all from the First and Second World Wars and they all have their own story.

MEMORY LANE

Report by Pippa Armstrong

"In the collection there's one called Some Chicken, Some Neck which was inspired by then Prime Minister Winston Churchill's speech in Ottawa.

"There's The Handsome Territorial, whose words are by Jimmy Kennedy who wrote the words to the Teddy Bear's picnic.

"Ma I Miss Your Apple Pie was a song for soldiers far from home. Adolf is a song by Annette Mills, who was the sister of John Mills and originator of TV's Muffin the Mule."

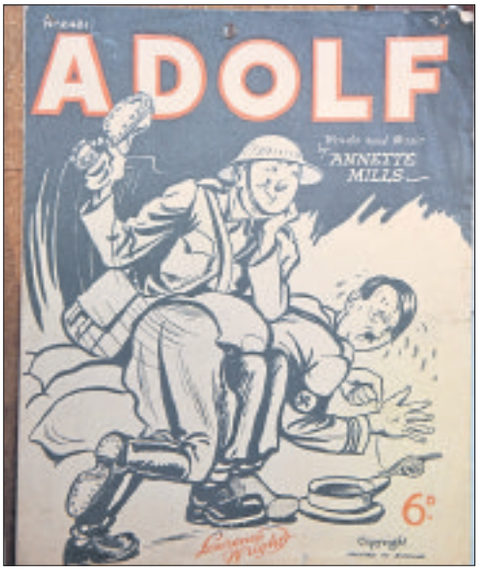
The collection includes songs from both world wars with the oldest dating back to the 1910s.

Mr Sparry is unsure of their current value, only knowing their original cost which ranged from an old sixpence to a shilling. He broke out the collection to help mark Dame Vera Lynn's landmark birthday.

Dame Vera is credited as a source of inspiration for soldiers and their loved ones during the Second World War due to her uplifting songs, which included We'll Meet Again and There'll Always be an England.

She became widely known as the forces' sweetheart after she travelled long distances, often at great personal risk, to entertain troops and provide them with messages of hope.

To celebrate her 100th birthday, Dame Vera released an album featuring re-orchestrated versions of her most loved music alongside her original vocals.It is thought the collection makes Dame Vera the first singer to have released a new album as a centenarian.



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Sex symbol? I just wanted to be Elvis

Punk pioneer Suzi Quatro has long been celebrated for paving the way for women in rock, with a no-nonsense attitude and kickass lyrics to match.

But surprisingly, looking back, Suzi had no idea there were even barriers to break down – and never considered herself as 'gendered'; wanting, as a child, to grow up to be Elvis Presley.

"I can't say that I knew that was what was happening, but I will say that all this time, all I was ever doing I was being myself," said Suzi, now aged 66.

"I've never been a gendered person. I saw Elvis when I was six-years-old on TV and thought 'that's going to be me'. It didn't even occur to me that he was a guy.

"I've talked to guys about this. I think it had to be somebody like me to pave the way.

"I kicked that door open, but I'd never had a female role model.

"Not that I realised what I was doing back then. I'd been in bands since I was 14.

"I wasn't even aware there was a 'door'."

Suzi, who achieved great success with hits such as Can The Can and 48 Crash, says that despite the difficult time in which her career began in the early seventies, she also never encountered any significant sexism or stereotyping – despite the issues which reportedly remain in the industry today.

"I always took myself seriously. What you give out, you get back," adds Suzi.

"I was a serious bass player. Don't mess with me – that was the vibe I gave out.

"You know, you just can't teach this to people. I can be one of the guys, up to a point – but there's a line.

"If men step over that line, they only do it once.

"I had some issues in the very, very early days when playing clubs with the bands. They wanted us to wear mini skirts because we were girls. Not that I minded wearing skirts, I just didn't like being dictated to.

"I came from a family of four girls – and we're all ballsy ladies.

"I'm the kind of person who believes everyone should shine their light. Gender simply shouldn't come into it.

"If you want to stay at home and be a housewife, and that will make you happy, then do it. Be who you are."

Despite always carrying a very sexy image, Suzi rarely bared any skin – and, as such, takes a dim view of female stars feeling the need to expose themselves to obtain fame and recognition.

"I think people like Cher and Madonna were true to themselves at the time," says Suzi.

"But nowadays, a lot of women stars are basically naked on stage. They think they're running the show and that they're in control, but they're not.

"I had a sexy image, but I was never up there exposing anything.

"I'm really hoping it will turn around again soon. It's not what I fought for."

The star will perform at the Genting Arena on October 14, on the Legends Live tour – accompanied by Hot Chocolate, The Osmonds and David Essex.

"I'm touring with David Essex – we used to see each other at every Top Of The Pops. I'm really pleased to be headlining this tour with people I know. We all started off in the same era.

"I'm going to get a few poker games going, I tell you.

"I can't say I know The Osmonds as well though.

"Errol Brown, meanwhile, was good friend. I loved him truly. Before I'd made it, I was at his house and asked if he could lend me £5.

"For 35 years, every time I saw him after that, he'd say 'don't you pay me back, that was a lucky £5'. He was such a lovely man.

"The show will pretty much be made up of all the hits – that's what the fans will be there for."

Suzi, who previously had a show on ITV called Gas Street, has had plenty of experience in Birmingham, having filmed the programme there.

"I like it very much. There's a nice big shopping centre there, which I'll certainly be visiting. I'm a mall-aholic any way," laughs Suzi.

"I'll be sure to have an Indian meal while I'm in Birmingham too. It has to be done. Indian food isn't big in the US like it is here, but I love it."

In recent years, Suzi has worked on other projects – forming a supergroup called QSP with Bilston-born Don Powell from Slade and Andy Scott from The Sweet.

She also released a poetry book in 2014 named Through My Eyes and was named Doctor Of Music last October by Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

"I don't even have a high school diploma, so I was absolutely thrilled," adds Suzi.

"I have got a bucket list. And I'm very proud of the poetry I've released.

"I've also formed a new band called QSP. The album's come out in Australia and it's already at number 23 in their charts.

"I'd really like to make a film of my life next.

"I'm currently part way through writing a novel. I used a rock and roll girl as the lead character, but it's not me. In fact, as the story goes on, the characters seem to have minds of their own.

"And I've still got my Quatrophonic show on Radio Two. I'm a busy girl."

If given the opportunity to duet with anyone from history, Suzi says her top choices would include Elvis and Otis Redding. Modern day stars she'd like to work with, meanwhile, include Melissa Etheridge, Tom Petty or KT Tunstall.

"I'm also a huge fan of Bob Dylan," adds Suzi.

"I'd give both arms and legs to work with him.

"If I could meet anyone from throughout history, I would love to meet Jesus. He must have been the most charismatic of people.

"He'd be a good dinner partner too – you'd never have to buy wine."

More than 45 years after she launched her solo career, Suzi says the greatest thrill is still performing live.

"I really love my fans. It's a huge thrill every show when I see everyone walking away with a smile on their faces – and I can think, 'I did that'. If that happens, I really am a happy girl," she adds.

"You can't buy that feeling for all the money in the world.

"It's just who I am, I'm a born entertainer."

Kirsten Rawlins

Smoulder – but Suzi's never exposed much flesh

I believe everyone should shine their light. Gender simply shouldn't come into it.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Temples back with new album

Temples evolving unique style of baroque and roll

It doesn't take too long with Temples' second album Volcano to realise that a noticeable evolution has taken place, whilst the psychedelic pop band from Northamptonshire have kept intact the things fans loved about their debut, Sun Structures.

Corkscrew-haired singer James Bagshaw says it's all part of learning their craft and the sonic possibilities. He explains: "If there's a sense of scale, it was really just a result of implementing a load of things that we didn't know about the first time around."

Referring back to Sun Structures, a record that was recorded in his house in his native Kettering, James explains: "We didn't even have a subwoofer to listen back to things that we did on Sun Structures."

Co-founding member and bassist Thomas Warmsley says: "We discovered a lot as we went along and the excitement at having done so radiates outwards."

It's a point emphatically born out by the track Mystery Of Pop where Sam Toms' brittle, piledriving rhythm clears the path for breathless baroque pop where synth and mellotron interweave to beguiling effect. Oh My Saviour was written in Japan, where Temples enjoy an enormous following, at the foot of Mount Fuji, near the site of the eponymous rock festival where they played. "That's when the album began in earnest for me," says James.

Temples are back in Birmingham, at the O2 Institute on Sunday, for their first gig in the city since their debut on the NME Tour exactly three years ago. The band's confident approach must in part be a result of the critical acclaim Sun Structures received.

From Russia with love – of dance

Strictly Come Dancing star Pasha Kovalev brings his new show Let's Dance the Night Away to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday (9), a show charting Pasha's life from Russia to Strictly stardom.

"Let's Dance the Night Away is a very personal show, because you will see my story of becoming a dancer, travelling the world with my dance career and following my dream," says the 37-year-old professional dancer and Strictly champion, who is originally from Siberia.

"It has been a long journey. I started dancing in Russia, moved to America, travelled the world and ended up here in the UK. Now I'm doing the best job ever!"

He describes Let's Dance The Night Away as 'a full-on show, packed with incredible dancing, fun and adventure'.

"There will be lots of dancing, lots of sequins and beautiful costumes, beautiful lights and amazing music. There are lots of surprises too. We will have audience participation, so some lucky people can jump on stage and show me what they've got."

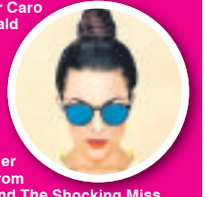
Audience interaction is a key part to the tour, Pasha will be holding a Q&A session before his show. "We are running lots of promotions and competitions to win tickets to the Q&A sessions on my Twitter @PashaKovalev."

Pasha will be joined by Wolverhampton dance school, Linzi G School of Dance in both halves of the show.

"I will actually be doing one of the dances with the dance school. I started dancing when I was eight years old. I remember every single time we had a proper performance in front of a proper audience. You grow, you become better, you polish your skills. That's what I'm hoping the performance will do for youngsters at my show."

Pasha will also be joined by his professional dance partner Anya Garnis. Tickets are available from www.grandtheatre.co.uk or on 01902 429212.

Caro's comeback with Emerald Isle



Retro-styled Dutch singer Caro Emerald brings her Emerald Island Tour to Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday and Sunday nights.

The 35-year-old pop-jazz songstress from Amsterdam enjoyed Euro-wide success with her albums Deleted Scenes from the Cutting Room Floor and The Shocking Miss Emerald.

Walsall's Jorja Smith has sold out her gig on Saturday at the O2 Academy; soul man Billy Ocean is at the Symphony Hall on Monday.

See funny side as play goes wrong

A West End hit that won the Best New Comedy accolade at the 2015 Laurence Olivier Awards is coming to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next week. The Play That Goes Wrong joins 'The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society' as they put on a 1920s murder mystery. It soon becomes apparent that the accident-prone thespians face a battle against the odds to reach their final curtain. The frantic farce will be staged at the Lichfield Street theatre from Monday to Saturday, April 8.

Mod musical All Or Nothing, featuring the songs of The Small Faces, is at the New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to Saturday. Meanwhile, the hugely popular Billy Elliot continues at Birmingham Hippodrome until April 28 and Bob Marley musical One Love is at Birmingham Rep until April 15.

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1/5	5	Weymouth (more dates)
1/5	5	Weston Super Mare (more dates)
15/5	5	Dover/Canterbury
22/5	5	Cornwall (Looe)(more dates)
22/5	6	Highland Railways
29/5	5	Ilfracombe
29/5	5	Snowdonia and Trains
5/6	5	Bournemouth (more dates)
5/6	5	Warners Thornsby Hall
8/6	5	Norfolk Broads
22/6	5	Sidmouth (more dates)
23/6	3	Leicester/Bosworth Battle
26/6	5	Babbacombe
3/7	5	Scarborough
9/7	6	Durham and Northumbria
19/7	5	Llandudno (more dates)
22/7	7	Tour of Celtic Countries
20/5	5	Great Yarmouth
23/7	7	Scotland Fort William
31/7	5	North Devon Bideford
31/7	5	Isle of Scilly
6/8	5	Peak District
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SATURDAY'S TV APRIL 1

CHOICE

Emma Willis

The Voice UK (ITV, 8.30pm)
This year's contest draws to a close as the four finalists take to the stage in the first part of the two-part climax. Having progressed through seven weeks of blind auditions, two battle rounds, four live knockout stages and the ever-tense quarter- and semi-finals, the would-be stars face the ultimate test of their vocal abilities, with the winner earning themselves a prestigious contract with Polydor Records. Superstar coaches Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Jennifer Hudson and Gavin Rossdale are on hand to share their thoughts as each performer steps down from the stage, with one of them being eliminated from the contest before the last programme of the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry Everyday. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. **2.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.15 Film:** Madagascar. (2005) Animated comedy, with the voice of Ben Stiller.

6.35 BBC News.

6.45 Regional Programme.

6.50 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a medical version of the celebrity quiz, with contestants Guy Henry, Rosie Marcel, Vicki Pepperdine, Ricky Grover, Raji Singh, Hilary Jones, Charles Dale and Amanda Henderson trying to come up with the least likely correct answers to a series of questions posed to members of the public.

7.40 Who Dares Wins. Game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.

8.25 Casualty. Alicia wakes up in Sam's bed, while Iain and Gem's relationship is tested when they spend the day together on the rig and Iain is confronted with his biggest fear. Evie is confronted at home by a masked intruder who attacks her and ransacks the property, and when Evie manages to escape, she is hit outside by Susie's car.

9.15 All Round to Mrs Brown's. Mrs Brown's Boys creator, writer and star Brendan O'Carroll dons Agnes's famous cardigan and curlers once again, throwing open the doors of the larger-than-life Irish matriarch's home to host a Saturday night chat show, filmed in front of a live studio audience. Inviting friends, family and special guests to join her in the sitting room, Mrs Brown stages mischievous stunts, and gives a few celebrity visitors a piece of her mind.

10.15 BBC News; Weather; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Liverpool v Everton.

12.00 Film: Jagged Edge. (1985) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00 Film:** Beautiful But Dangerous. (1954) **8.25 Film:** We Dive at Dawn. (1943) **10.00** Natural World. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.30** Hairy Bikers' Best of British. (R) **1.15 Film:** Gypsy. (1962) Musical, starring Rosalind Russell and Natalie Wood. **3.30** Natural World. (R) **4.30** University Challenge. (R) **5.00** Only Connect. (R) **5.30** Flog It! (R)

6.30 Gardeners' World. Monty Don begins a brand new project when he starts a new soft fruit garden, and also plants new potatoes and divides herbaceous plants in the jewel garden. Including weather. (R)

7.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby. Giles Coren and Monica Galetti join the staff working in some of the most extraordinary hotels around the world, beginning with Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, which employs 9,500 people and caters for a million guests a year. Their duties include acting as attendants at the world's largest infinity pool, working as a butler under a former special forces officer, and joining a catering team that provides Brazilian, Chinese, French and Japanese cuisine for 60 restaurants. (R)

8.00 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton visits the once-inhabited island of Heisgeir, sails around the gannet haven of Sula Sgeir and endures rough seas to make landfall on North Rona. Last in the series.

8.30 Dad's Army. The men of Walmington-on-Sea's Home Guard use up all their ammunition shooting at a passing aircraft, so Captain Mainwaring has to hold a court of inquiry. (R)

9.00 QI XL. Stephen Fry invites David Mitchell, Sue Perkins and Sami Shah to join regular panellist Alan Davies as he meanders about some places that start with the letter M.

9.45 Film: Jimi: All Is By My Side. (2013) Premiere. Biopic of Jimi Hendrix following the events of 1966, when he left New York to spend a year living in London.

11.35 Film: Populaire. (2012) Comedy, starring Deborah Francois and Romain Duris.

1.20 This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.20** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** Alphabetical. (R) **10.20** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **11.20** Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) **11.50** ITV News; Weather. **12.00** Rebound. (R) **12.55 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd. (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Charles Grodin. **2.40 Film:** Superman. (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve. **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Let Loose! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from cute kids and crazy animals to pranks and painful-looking accidents.

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. Dermot O'Leary joins the duo on tonight's show for an edition of I'm A Celebrity Get Out of Me Ear! Plus, Ant and Dec take a journey through time back to the 1980s.

8.30 The Voice UK. This year's contest concludes with a two-part finale as four acts face the ultimate test of their vocal abilities, with only three going through to the last stage.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Lethal Weapon. A man wrecks a jewellery store and puts a security guard in hospital. Murtaugh delves deep into the psyche of the suspect, a former Navy Seal once treated for post traumatic stress disorder, and draws parallels between him and his partner Riggs, who also once served in the military. Although Riggs' association with the suspect threatens to interfere with the case, it also forces him to open up to his colleague about the experiences that have shaped him. Clayne Crawford, Damon Wayans and Dante Brown star. (R)

11.35 The Chase. (R)

12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Triathlon: Challenge Wanaka. **6.30** The King of Queens. (R) **6.55** The King of Queens. (R) **7.20** The King of Queens. (R) **7.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.35** Frasier. (R) **9.05** Frasier. (R) **9.40** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.05** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Simpsons. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** Extreme Food. **1.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Film: Titanic. (1997) A party of explorers studying the sunken remains of the famous liner meets an elderly woman who was a passenger on the ill-fated maiden voyage. She recounts how she boarded the ship while on the brink of being forced into marriage by her family, and was stopped from killing herself by a penniless artist. She fell in love with her saviour, but the disaster on the horizon meant their time together was doomed to be short. James Cameron's Oscar-winning romantic drama, starring Kate Winslet, Leonardo DiCaprio, Billy Zane, Kathy Bates and Bill Paxton.

10.45 Film: Colombiana. (2011) An orphan grows up to be an assassin while secretly plotting revenge on the gangsters who murdered her parents. Action thriller, starring Zoe Saldana and Cliff Curtis.

12.45 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Part two of two. Mill Street Bistro proprietor Joe Nagy slips back into his old ways and picks petty fights with Gordon Ramsay as the chef tries to give him advice. (R) **1.35** Our Guy in China. Guy Martin concludes his adventure by taking on his toughest physical challenge yet as he attempts the fastest crossing of the Taklamakan Desert on a bicycle. (R) **2.30** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. It is the day of Amy and Ryan's wedding, but Ryan has also got their potential move to America playing on his mind, while Scott is having a fashion crisis. **4.35** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. Featuring retired couple Lenny and Mary in Reigate, Surrey, who want to sell up and return to their Irish roots, but their home's dated decor is preventing them securing a sale. (R) **5.30** Fifteen to One. General knowledge quiz. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.40** Access. **10.50** Police Interceptors Unleashed. **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) **1.20** On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) **2.20** 18 Kids & Claiming Benefits. (R) **3.20** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The officers chase a debt of almost £2,000 in unpaid parking fines, and later encounter the extraordinary case of a debt of £80,000 owed by a hotel owner to his ex-girlfriend. However, as they begin to search the property, they call upon police back-up as the agents fear the debtor may have access to firearms. Elsewhere, two officers head to a car garage in Manchester where the owner owes £2,000 after losing a court case over a faulty vehicle. (R)

7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigates when two pharmaceutical executives are murdered, uncovering a criminal who changes his identity for each offence he commits.

8.00 NCIS. A deep-sea diver is murdered on the job, and the team must identify which of his co-workers is the killer, before they are released from a four-day stint in a decompression chamber.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Barnsley v Sheffield Wednesday at Oakwell and Newcastle United v Wigan Athletic at St James' Park. Plus, the best of the action from Reading v Leeds United at the Madejski Stadium and Huddersfield Town v Burton Albion at the John Smith's Stadium.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the latest games in Leagues One and Two, including Bolton Wanderers v Chesterfield.

10.30 FIA Formula E Live: Mexico. The Mexico City ePrix. Coverage of the fourth round of the campaign from the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico.

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Blood Creek. (2009) **4.45** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Silk Road **8.00** Woolly Mammoth: Secrets from the Ice **9.00** Follow the Money **11.00** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.15** Classic Albums: The Beach Boys – Pet Sounds **1.15** The Joy of the Guitar Riff **2.15** The Kinks at the BBC **3.15** Sounds of the Eighties **3.40** Close

ITV2
11.35 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **1.10** Britain's Got Talent: Top 10 Child Stars **2.15 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.15** FYI Daily **3.20 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.00** Mr Bean **5.05 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **6.05** FYI Daily **6.10 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **7.00** Scorpion **8.00 Film:** The Mask (1994) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** The Mask (1994) **10.05** Family Guy **10.30** Celebrity Juice **11.15** Family Guy **12.10** American Dad! **1.10 Film:** Hall Pass (2011) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.25 Film: The Baby and the Battleship (1956) **12.25** FYI Daily **12.30 Film:** The Baby and the Battleship (1956) **1.30** Heidi **3.35** Rosemary & Thyme **4.40** Inspector Morse **7.00** Endeavour **9.00** Lewis **11.00** Les Dawson Forever **12.00** Colditz **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 The Big Fish Off **12.00** Fishing Impossible **1.00** Pawn Stars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Doncaster and Kempton Park. Coverage of today's race meetings. **4.00 Film:** The Horse Soldiers (1959) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** The Horse Soldiers (1959) **6.25** It's Not Rocket Science **7.25** Fierce **8.30 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **9.30** FYI Daily **9.35 Film:** Cannonball Run II (1984) **10.40 Film:** The Last Boy Scout (1991) **11.40** FYI Daily **11.45 Film:** The Last Boy Scout (1991) **12.55** The Motorsport Mavericks **1.55** Fifth Gear **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
4.00 The Big Bang Theory **6.30 Film:** Iron Man 2 (2010) **9.00 Film:** The Transporter (2002) **10.50** Gogglebox **12.55** Rude Tube **2.00** Naked Attraction **2.55** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.40** Melissa & Joey **4.25** Revenge

Film4
1.00 Catch That Kid (2004) **2.45** Carry On Cleo (1964) **4.35** Rango (2011) **6.45** Runaway Bride (1999) **9.00** The Wolf of Wall Street (2013) **12.30** A Field in England (2013) **2.15** Ben Wheatley Interview Special **2.25** Straightheads (2007) **4.00** Close

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CHOICE

Simon Reeve

Turkey with Simon Reeve (BBC2, 9pm)
In the second half of the journey, Simon travels along the Black Sea Coast to the capital of Ankara and the Northern Highlands, witnessing first hand the aftermath of fighting in Kurdish areas and meeting a conservationist attempting to preserve the region's brown bears. He then returns to Istanbul, where he takes part in a popular TV series set in the palace of the Ottoman Sultans.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.10** Countryfile Spring Diaries. (R) **2.55** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.20** Songs of Praise. **4.00** Rowing: The Boat Races. Live coverage of the men's and women's University Boat Races.

6.25 BBC News.

6.40 Regional Programme.

6.50 Countryfile. Reports on the UK's forests. Matt Baker helps out with an inventory of the New Forest's trees, and Ellie Harrison visits Inverness to take a look at industrial timber production and the impact of forestry on red squirrels. Sean Fletcher reports on the Scottish tradition of hutting, John Craven examines the revival of working with horses in forests, and Charlotte Smith discovers whether enough trees are being planted in Britain.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Caversham Park, near Reading, home to the BBC's international news monitoring service. Items brought in to be valued include some notes written by a 17th-century Shakespeare fan, a ring connected to a moving story of the California Gold Rush, and watercolour illustrations depicting life in 18th-century India.

9.00 Line of Duty. A new DCI is placed in charge of Operation Trapdoor as Roz fails to report for duty. A dismembered body is discovered, and the AC-12 team delves deeper into the case as evidence mounts up that an innocent man has been convicted of crimes he did not commit. Kate makes progress in her undercover role as all the signs point to crucial evidence being covered up by Roz, but the investigation suffers a setback when the team discovers that the main informant, forensics investigator Tim Ifield, has gone missing.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2.

11.35 I'm Different: Let Me Drive.

12.05 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.10** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 An Island Parish. (R) **6.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **7.15** Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **8.15** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater: Eating Together. (R) **11.45** Simply Nigella. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** World Figure Skating Championships. **3.00** When Danny Won the Masters. **3.30** Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **4.00** The House That £100K Built. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 Inside the Factory: Cereal. Gregg Wallace and Cherry Healey return with the programme shedding light on how some of Britain's biggest factories make the nation's favourite products, beginning with popular breakfast cereals. Gregg starts by receiving a boat-load of corn fresh from Argentina, and witnesses as it is cooked, milled and flavoured to become a top-selling cereal brand. Cherry learns about the immunity-boosting powers of vitamin D, which is added to many of the UK's most popular cereals, and historian Ruth Gordon samples a Victorian breakfast of lobster and pig's head, as part of a daily meal that included 4,500 calories. (R)

7.00 Robot Wars. Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon present the final heat, with reigning champion Apollo taking on rival contenders Ms Nightshade, Coyote, Rusty, Crackers'n'Smash, Meggamouse, Trolley Rage and Carbide through two group battles and a mini-league. The battles are all overseen by judges Professor Noel Sharkey, Professor Sethu Vijayakumar and Dr Lucy Rogers.

8.00 Top Gear. Motoring magazine, featuring test drives of the latest models.

9.00 Turkey with Simon Reeve. Part two of two. Simon travels along the Black Sea Coast to the capital of Ankara, and witnesses first hand the aftermath of fighting in Kurdish areas before returning to Istanbul.

10.00 Live at the Apollo. Host Joe Lycett introduces Ivo Graham and Phil Wang to the stage before a packed house at London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R)

10.45 Film: Dead Poets Society. (1989) Drama, with Robin Williams.

12.50 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.50** Holby City. (R) **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Secret Dealers. (R) **11.00** Wild Australia with Ray Mears. (R) **11.30** ITV News; Weather. **11.45 Film:** From Russia with Love. (1963) **2.00** The Voice UK. (R) **3.50** Little Big Shots. (R) **4.55** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.40** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 Five Gold Rings. Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield, in which two friends take on a father and son to answer visual questions by placing rings on an LED floor.

7.00 The Voice UK. Conclusion of the two-part final, as we learn which of the three remaining acts will be this year's winner and gain a prestigious contract with Polydor Records. Last in the series.

8.00 Vera. The detective is called to the University of Northumberland when Jamie Marshall, a promising young journalism student, falls to his death from the top of a disused faculty building. With no eyewitnesses and no immediate leads, Vera turns to friends and family to glean all she can about Jamie, and to discover who might have wanted him dead. With Brenda Blethyn, Kenny Doughty and Jon Morrison.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 The Nightly Show Best Bits. Highlights of the fifth week of the entertainment show, with Gordon Ramsay presenting a mix of topical monologues, studio games, celebrity guests, stand-up and video clips.

10.45 Film: Hard Target. (1993) An out-of-work merchant sailor investigates sadistic hunters who stalk human prey in New Orleans. John Woo's action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.

12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Cube. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.50** Gogglesprogs. (R) **2.55 Film:** Gulliver's Travels. (2010) Fantasy comedy, starring Jack Black. **4.30 Film:** Night at the Museum. (2006) Fantasy comedy, starring Ben Stiller.

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Titanic: The New Evidence. Investigative journalist and Titanic expert Senan Molony examines recently recovered photographs of the doomed ship, which provide fresh insight into the reasons for its sinking. The images reveal a strange mark on the hull, which may prove previously overlooked stories of a fire raging in the boiler room. This blaze may explain why the captain chose to ignore warnings of icebergs ahead and why the vessel sank so quickly after the fatal collision. (R)

8.00 Spying on the Royals. Part one of a two-part documentary examining an espionage operation conducted to gather information on Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. Shown to mark the 80th anniversary of the king's abdication, the programmes examines recently declassified documents revealing the extent of the surveillance and who ordered it, as well as featuring dramatic reconstructions and eyewitness accounts.

9.00 Homeland. Dar plays his hand and Quinn revisits his past. Thriller following a team of CIA agents battling terrorists and problems in their personal lives. Claire Danes stars.

10.05 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jimmy Carr hosts the hybrid comedy panel quiz show, as guest team captain David Walliams joins forces with Jonathan Ross, while Jon Richardson teams up with Joe Lycett. (R)

12.00 Film: Seven Psychopaths. (2012) **2.00** The Last Leg. (R) **2.55** Great British Buildings: Restoration of the Year. (R) **3.50** Building the Dream.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.10** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Fireman Sam. (R) **6.50** Rupert Bear. (R) **7.00** Olly the Little White Van. **7.05** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **7.20** Little Princess. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.05** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.35** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.35** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.35 Film:** Operation: Daybreak. (1975) **3.50 Film:** The Four Feathers. (2002) Historical adventure, starring Heath Ledger.

6.15 5 News Weekend.

6.20 Inside Kensington Palace. The history of famous buildings, beginning by going behind the scenes of the royal residence, home to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry. (R)

7.05 Inside Buckingham Palace. Part two of two. Despite being closed and secretive, the Palace is a symbol of everything British. This edition reflects on previous monarchs' accomplishments during their reign. (R)

8.00 Disobedient Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. Compilation of internet videos featuring dogs doing humorous things.

9.00 The Michael McIntyre Story. Documentary about the comedian's rise to fame, examining his breakthrough performance at the 2006 Royal Variety show and role in the reinvention of stand-up comedy on TV.

10.30 20 Moments That Shocked Comedy. Countdown of memorable comedy moments, including the launch of The Young Ones and Spitting Image, and the controversy surrounding Monty Python's Life of Brian. (R)

12.00 Football League Tonight: The Checkatrade Trophy. **12.45** Police Interceptors: Takedown. (R) **1.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild. (R) **4.00** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Dame Vera Lynn: Happy 100th Birthday **8.00** Giselle: Belle of the Ballet **9.00** Do We Really Need the Moon? **10.00** Gravity and Me: The Force that Shapes our Lives **11.30** Sex: A Horizon Guide **12.30** The Story of Maths **1.30** The Century That Wrote Itself **2.30** How to Get Ahead: At Versailles **3.30** Close

ITV2

1.05 2Awesome: Guidance **1.40** 2Awesome: Fame High **1.55** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.10** 2Awesome: Side Effects **2.40** The Hot Desk: Emma Willis **2.50** You've Been Framed! Gold **3.20** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **4.55 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00 Film:** The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **7.15 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.20** The Vampire Diaries **2.15** Teleshopping

ITV3

11.30 Heidi **1.45** Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **3.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Les Dawson: An Audience With That Never Was **10.00** Les Dawson Forever **11.05 Film:** Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **1.10** Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **2.50** May the Best House Win **4.35** On the Buses **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

7.15 The Big Fish Off **8.15 Film:** Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **9.15** FYI Daily **9.20 Film:** Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **10.00 Film:** First Blood (1982) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** First Blood (1982) **11.55 Film:** Cliffhanger (1993) **12.55** FYI Daily **1.00 Film:** Cliffhanger (1993) **2.10** Hogan's Heroes **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

2.00 The Goldbergs **3.30** Black-ish **4.00** Baby Daddy **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.00** Celebrity First Dates **12.05** Naked Attraction **1.10** Gogglebox **2.15** Bizarre ER **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD

Film4

1.00 Love Happens (2009) **3.10** The Hound of the Baskervilles (1959) **4.55** The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising (2007) **6.55** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **9.00** Chef (2014) **11.15** Blood Ties (2013) **1.45** Weekend (2011) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Conan the Barbarian, Channel 5, 11.05pm
An evil warlord kills a barbarian chieftain, whose son grows up to be a mighty warrior and seeks revenge for his father's death. He finds there is more at stake, as the tyrant is close to acquiring all the pieces of a magic mask, which will make him all-powerful. Fantasy adventure, with Jason Momoa. (2011)

TUESDAY
Strangers in Amish Country, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A military nurse returns from a tour of duty in Afghanistan to her family's farm in rural Ohio, and falls for an Amish neighbour after an intruder wreaks havoc. Romantic drama, starring Jes Macallan. (2017)

WEDNESDAY
Abducted: The Carlina White Story, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A couple take their three-week-old baby to a hospital for treatment, but she is snatched by a woman desperate for a child. She raises the infant as her own for years, but as the girl grows up, she begins to suspect the truth and resolves to investigate her kidnapping and find her parents. Fact-based drama, starring Keke Palmer and Aunjanue Ellis. (2012)

Conan the Barbarian Conan the Barbarian, Monday, Channel 5, 11.05pm

THURSDAY
Bond of Silence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman searches for answers after her husband is mysteriously murdered while trying to subdue a wild teenage house party on New Year's Eve. However, as she tries to find out the truth, she faces secrecy at every turn from the party-goers and their parents. Drama, starring Kim Raver, Greg Grunberg and Charlie McDermott. (2010)

FRIDAY
The Stepford Wives, BBC1, 11.50pm
A ruthless TV boss suffers a nervous breakdown and is persuaded to relocate to an idyllic town. However, she begins to suspect something is very wrong with the local women and sets out to discover the dark secret behind the seemingly perfect community. Frank Oz's comedy remake of the 1975 satire, with Nicole Kidman, Matthew Broderick, Bette Midler, Glenn Close and Christopher Walken. (2004)

PICK OF THE WEEK

The new teams hope they can rise to the challenge

Even in the year of Brexit, Donald Trump becoming US President and the deaths of a distressing number of much-loved celebrities, the announcement in September 2016 that The Great British Bake Off was leaving the BBC was frontpage news.

It was still making headlines this year too, as it was revealed that Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding will be taking over as presenters after Mel and Sue declined to make the jump to Channel 4, while former Great British Menu expert Prue Leith will be filling the judging role vacated by Mary Berry.

But amid all the speculation about how the new line-up will fare and when the next series is likely to hit our screens, you may have missed out on the news that another member of the Bake Off family has been undergoing a makeover of its own.

If you need your memory jogged, the first series of Bake Off: Crème de la Crème aired on BBC Two last year, and gave teams of professional pastry chefs the chance to show what they could do.

Given that the amateurs on The Great British Bake Off have rustled us such spectacular creations as a bread lion, a cake Moulin Rouge and a gingerbread Colosseum, it was hoped that the experts would come up with some truly jaw-dropping showstoppers – and they definitely delivered.

However, the series still got something of a mixed response from viewers and the critics. While we perhaps should have expected Crème de la Crème to be more openly competitive than the jolly, pastel-coloured Bake Off tent – after all, these contestants were putting their professional reputations on the line – the fact that three different teams competed in each episode meant there wasn't much of a chance to get to know the individual bakers.

Add in the complicated scoring system – each of the three judges marked each round out of 30 – and it began to seem as if the series was lacking some of the heart and humour that had made its sister show such a hit.

So, there have been a few tweaks to the recipe this time around, including a new presenter as Angus Deayton takes over from Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, presumably to add a layman's perspective to what had been a very technical show.

The judging panel has been reduced from three to two, with Cherish Finden and Benoit Blin returning to their roles, and there's also been a change to the format. This time around, two groups of five teams will compete across three heats to give us a chance to get know them and pick someone to root for.

But the standard of baking hasn't been relaxed, as in the opening edition, the teams are asked to make 36 identical Moka au Café slices and 36 identical Napoleons, in just three hours before reinventing the Peach Melba as a fabulous showstopper.

And the team with the fewest points will be going home.

Bake Off: Creme de la Creme, Tuesday, BBC2, 8pm

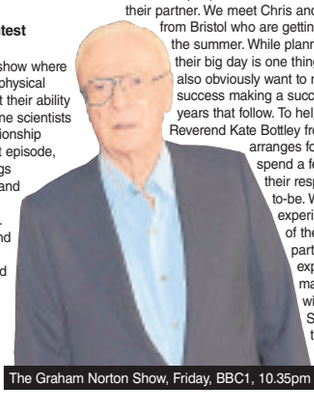
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Child of Our Time
BBC1, 9pm
For most of us, the millennium probably doesn't feel as if it was that long ago, but the 25 children born in 2000 who are taking part in this series are now 16, which means they are free to live by themselves, get married, pay taxes and even have offspring of their own. Robert Winston and Tanya Byron catch up with the group in this two-part documentary. Among the highlights is Charlie's first taste of love, Eve's life-changing revelation, and Jamie discussing the shocking events that caused him to re-evaluate his priorities. There's also an insight into research involving human biology and neuroscience that helps to explain the most baffling aspects of this stage of life. Yes, there really is a reason for moody teenagers!

TUESDAY
The Richard Dimbleby Lecture 2017
BBC1, 10.45pm
John O Brennan spent almost four years as director of the CIA, and as chief counterterrorism adviser to Barack Obama. In light of shocking events in London on March 22, the threat of terrorism is more relevant than ever, so this year's Richard Dimbleby Lecture should prove all too topical. Here Brennan discusses the future security and stability of the world, drawing on his experience of intelligence collection and analysis and covert operations to determine how societies will protect themselves in the face of turbulent global events.

WEDNESDAY
Me and My Dog: The Ultimate Contest
BBC2, 8pm
New series. Chris Packham hosts the show where dog owners and their pets compete in physical and mental challenges designed to test their ability to communicate, with trainers and canine scientists on hand to help them develop the relationship between human and animal. In the first episode, half the contestants must lead their dogs through a series of gates using verbal and physical signals, while the others must collect tennis balls in fast-flowing water. The final challenge sees the owners and dogs compete in a tethered biking challenge, to decide who has triumphed in the first stage of the contest.

THURSDAY
Alone with the In-Laws
BBC2, 8pm
Is modern marriage really that much different from relationships of the past? And can modern couples learn something from their parents? Those are the questions tackled in this programme which places a soon-to-be-wed pair with their in-laws to see what they can learn from the people who raised them and their partner. We meet Chris and Stacey from Bristol who are getting married in the summer. While planning for their big day is one thing, the couple also obviously want to make a success making a success of the years that follow. To help out, Reverend Kate Bottley from Gogglebox arranges for them to spend a few days with their respective in-laws-to-be. What will the experiment tell each of them about their partner's expectation of married life? And will Chris and Stacey still feel the same about trying the knot?


The Graham Norton Show, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

FRIDAY
Unreported World
Channel 4, 7.30pm
The statistics of the Syrian refugee crisis are hard to comprehend. More than three million people have now fled the country, with Lebanon alone taking in one and a half million. And that number is increasing daily. In this powerful documentary, Shaunagh Connaire reports from the country where, despite offers of assistance from the international community, some of those most in need – refugee children with serious medical conditions – are dying while they wait for help. Several developed nations have promised to help the most vulnerable youngsters and resettle them. However, it seems there are limits on medical grounds as to who is being accepted, resulting in some of the sickest children and their families being behind.

The Graham Norton Show
BBC1, 10.35pm
The Irishman returns with a brand new run of 13 shows. Here, Graham catches up with Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman, stars of new heist comedy Going in Style. Plus, comedian Jack Whitehall and Game of Thrones actress Gemma Whelan talk about their roles in BBC One's Evelyn Waugh adaptation, Decline and Fall.

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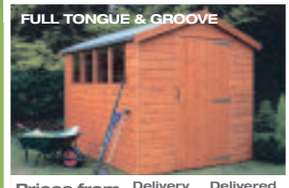

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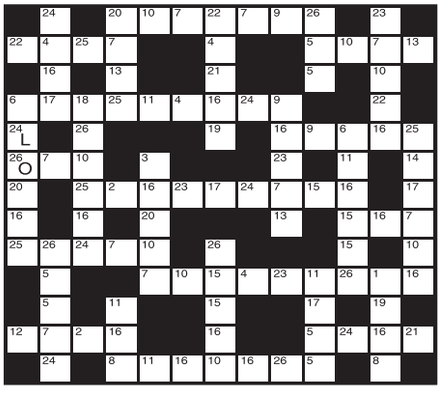
BRAIN GYM

No.423

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to start you off.



1	14
2	15
3	16
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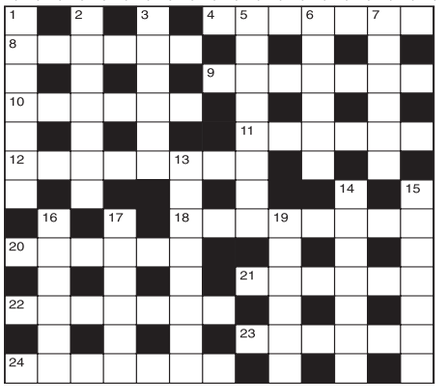
12	25
13	26 O

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 O	2 Z	3 A	4 V	5 K	6 B	7 Y	8 F	9 R	10 S	11 U	12 W	13 L
14 Q	15 G	16 D	17 P	18 T	19 N	20 M	21 C	22 E	23 H	24 J	25 X	26 I

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

4. Forward some money (7)
8. Rose is involved in basketwork (6)
9. A misguided vicar gets direction in greed (7)
10. More suitable as a workman? (6)
11. It may be rude to make a digression (6)
12. No result of snap decision (8)
18. It may be taken to promote good feeling (8)
20. Go over undulating track (6)
21. Kind of pastel sheets (6)
22. Somewhat overstrained in verbal construction (7)
23. One eats it, as matter of course (6)
24. Supports inferior goods (7)

Down

1. Go in for modified coverage (7)
2. Grape-producer includes a label to mark its year (7)
3. Ranted perhaps when heated (6)
5. Business interest (8)
6. Put in charge at the lemonade factory? (6)
7. Naturally, it raises awkward points (6)
13. Put into liquidation (8)
14. Get into bad shape (7)
15. A complaint soon spotted? (7)
16. A bang on the head? (6)
17. Fuss about the French in Spain (6)
19. Is left and right in the water (6)

Quick Clues:

Across

4. Quarrel (7)
8. Symbol (6)
9. Attack (7)
10. Enemy (6)
11. Tone of voice (6)
12. Dedication (8)
18. Voluntary (4-4)
20. Discuss (6)
21. Hidden (6)
22. Spear (7)
23. Individual (6)
24. 100 years (7)

Down

1. Treachery (7)
2. Notice (7)
3. Occupant (6)
5. Example (8)
6. Swagger (6)
7. Gift (6)
13. Lower (8)
14. Malady (7)
15. Palpable (7)
16. 10 years (6)
17. Obvious (6)
19. Exultant (6)

Sudoku

						4	5	3
5				6	8		7	1
		9	3		4			
6				9				
	2		7		1		9	
		7		3			1	8
					6	2		
9	1		8			3		5
7	4	6			3			

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	3	2	9	8	7	6	4	5
9	4	6	1	5	3	8	2	7
7	5	8	2	6	4	3	9	1
3	6	1	7	4	5	2	8	9
2	8	4	6	9	1	5	7	3
5	7	9	3	2	8	1	6	4
8	9	3	4	1	2	7	5	6
4	2	7	5	3	6	9	1	8
6	1	5	8	7	9	4	3	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Screwdriver; 9 Nip; 10 Estimator; 11 Orbit; 13 Runways; 14 Parish; 16 Ledger; 18 Special; 19 Tests; 20 Endurance; 21 Tie; 22 Proposition. Down: 2 Cup; 3 Event; 4 Dotard; 5 Immense; 6 Estranges; 7 Encompassed; 8 Pre-stressed; 12 Bartender; 15 Stirrup; 17 Planes; 19 Treat; 21 Too.
QUICK - Across: 1 Forgiveness; 9 Inn; 10 Animation; 11 Ashen; 13 Execute; 14 Pariah; 16 Strafe; 18 Orifice; 19 Spend; 20 Aggravate; 21 Din; 22 True-hearted. Down: 2 Own; 3 Grain; 4 Voiced; 5 Nearest; 6 Stimulate; 7 Disapproval; 8 Independent; 12 Harbinger; 15 Agitate; 17 Deface; 19 Sheer; 21 Due.

Quiz

1. Which South African PM was assassinated in 1966?
2. In which sport was Britain's Carl Furrer world champion in 1982?
3. What is the capital of Nevada?
4. What type of animal is a brocket?
5. Who was the Beatles' producer?
6. In which field did Wole Soyinka win the 1986 Nobel Prize?
7. Of which county was Parts of Lindsey a division?
8. Which inventor's middle name was Alva?
9. What was Colin McRae the first Briton to win for 18 years?
10. Which political figure wrote the play Largo Desolato in 1985?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Croydon; 2 Charlotte Corday; 3 Dodo; 4 Oboe; 5 Bratislava; 6 Anno Domini; 7 Putney; 8 A Central American bird; 9 Gulf of Alaska; 10 Terpsichore.

Niner: RUMINATES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

47218 gives a French river,
68518 gives a second French river,
51936 gives a Pakistani river.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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SUN 10.00-16.00

Big Bilashings of amazing curry

RESTAURANTS like The Bilash can give a reviewer a bad name. The nature of the beast is to try to find fault; perhaps the lamb isn't quite tender enough or the dish is too spicy or too salty.

Maybe the decor is a bit tired or, alternatively, too overblown. Alternatively, the service may not be good enough, or it might be way too clingy and attentive.

And then you get the rare occasions where you find yourself enjoying a meal that is as near perfect as it is possible to get. It can't be easy for Sitab Khan, who has been the chief proprietor at The Bilash, in Cheapside, Wolverhampton, for more than three decades. With his son, Mohammed, he has built a reputation for his restaurant as one of the best in the region.

REPUTATION

It's not just a good Indian restaurant, it's a good restaurant full stop. And it charges the sort of prices you expect to pay in a top restaurant. That, in turn, means the pressure never lets up; The Bilash faces a constant battle to justify its reputation and maintain the high standards every customer will expect.

You can see the pressure in the kitchen when evening service hits a peak. The large window between the dining area and the kitchen gives a spectator's view of a team working at full speed. There aren't many smiles but there is a lot of focus on display. The contrast with the relaxed, newly-decorated dining area couldn't be more stark. Cream leather and delicate filigree Indian lampshades all add to a sense of light and space.

The £100,000 revamp has also included a series of booths that were clearly popular on the night we visited.

The table was barely cleared of poppadums when our starters started arriving. Tiger prawn in red pepper sauce, sitting on a puri – a small fried bread. Pretty as a picture and just as nice to eat. Jalpari kebabs are saffron flavoured fish rolls, stuffed with prawns. The spicing is light, with a crisp shell around the rice and prawn stuffing. My choice was tandoori pomfret – a marinated, herbed and spiced fillet of traditional Indian fish served up with a neat little carrot salad and a smear of tamarind sauce. It was delicate, flavourful and delicious.

After a few minutes of arguing over whose starter tasted best, the main courses started arriving.

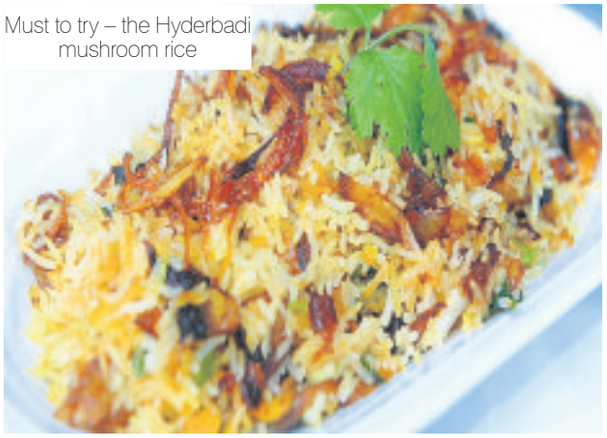
Mine was a Mangshor Jhool, a Bengali lamb curry. The meat was tender and the gravy, while full of flavour, didn't detract from its taste.

My other half had gone for something milder: Murgh Begum Bahar, a chicken dish with a rich pale sauce of yoghurt, curd and almonds. Our daughter had chosen Maacher Jhool, a Bengali fish curry. She couldn't shut up about it. I took a taste and it was hard to argue with her enthusiasm. Side dishes were made up of a couple of naan breads – one peshwari and one garlic – and a basmati rice made with onions, ginger, salt and steamed mushroom. I'd happily eat that on its own as a meal.

There were three desserts on offer, so we had one each: a neat little chocolate sponge with a molten middle, a white chocolate affair like an Eton Mess and a traditional gulab jamun, sweet spongy balls made with evaporated milk and soaked in rose scented syrup. With a good strong cup of coffee to finish.

With a bottle of wine, two people aren't going to leave with a bill much under £80 but there's a good reason why, after more than three decades, The Bilash maintains its reputation.

SIMON PENFOLD



Must to try – the Hyderbadi mushroom rice

Sleek and chic – inside is classy and contemporary

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Four-bedroomed detached home has "wow factor"

The Hollies in Cheslyn Hay village is an outstanding four-bedroomed detached family home that is exceptionally well presented throughout.

Packed with the "wow factor", it is for sale through Webbs at £385,000.

It is set in a quiet cul-de-sac location, close to local amenities and schools.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a through entrance hallway, a lounge, a dining room, a breakfast room, a conservatory, a utility room and a guest WC. To the first floor there are four double bedrooms, with a dressing area and en-suite to the master bedroom and a family bathroom. Externally there are landscaped gardens, a driveway and a double garage.

In more detail, designer radiators feature throughout. The through hallway has stairs off. The lounge has a bay window, a wall-mounted electric plasma fire and an open aspect to the dining room. The breakfast room overlooks the rear garden and the conservatory has French doors to the garden.

The kitchen includes a range of wall, base and drawer units, work surface over, an inset single drainer sink, integrated double oven, hob with extractor hood over, integrated dishwasher, ample appliance space and door to the utility room with a sink, units and ample appliance space.

Upstairs the master suite has French doors to the front, opening on to a Juliette balcony, fitted wardrobes and an en-suite and a dressing area with an open aspect to the bedroom.

Bedroom two has a window to the front and fitted wardrobes. Bedroom three overlooks the rear and has fitted wardrobes, as does bedroom four.

The bathroom is positioned to the rear of the home and is tiled to bathing areas.

The garden is beautifully landscaped, having an extensive patio area, ornate granite wall, gravel area, lawn and has shrub borders.

A truly stunning property, interested would-be buyers are urged to book a viewing quickly.

CHESLYN HAY £385,000

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Webbs
TEL: 01922 663399
EMAIL: sales@webbsestateagents.co.uk

KEY FEATURES

- 4 bedrooms
- 3 receptions
- Double garage
- Sought after village
- Conservatory

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Walsall

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Goodchilds
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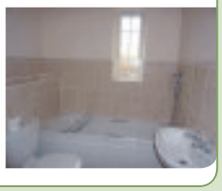
Manorhouse Close,Walsall

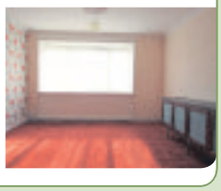
- Two Bedroom Apartment
- Open Plan Lounge / Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Fitted Wardrobes
- Rating: 68
- Secure Communal Entrance
- Rating:71



£525 PCM

Cavendish Gardens,Walsall

- Spacious First Floor Flat
- Large Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Modern Bathroom
- Communal Gardens
- Gas Central Heating
- Rating: 79
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers



£525 PCM

Stamping Way,Walsall

- Four Bedroom
- Three bedrooms
- Fitted Kitchen/Diner
- En-Suite Shower Room
- Entrance Hall
- Rating:77

£850 PCM

Cheniston Road,Willenhall,

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Entrance Hall
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Kitchen
- Separate Utility
- Rating: 85

£650.00 PCM

Broadway,Walsall

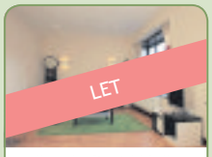
- Two Bedroom Apartment
- New Build
- Communal Hallway with Lift
- Lounge with Balcony
- Fitted Kitchen
- Rating:88

£595 PCM

Birch Coppice Gardens,Willenhall

- Four Bedroom Semi Detached
- Newly Fitted Kitchen
- Downstairs W.C.
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Garage & Off Road Parking
- Rating:58

£750 PCM



Kinnerley Street, Walsall,

- Three Bedroom Detached
- Modern Fitted Kitchen
- Two Double Bedrooms and Single
- Gas Central Heating
- Viewings are highly recommended
- Rating:34

£695 PCM

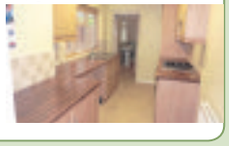
Ely Place, Walsall,

- Three Bedroom Terraced
- Quiet Cul-De-Sac Location
- Lounge
- Modern Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Off Road Parking

£6595 PCM

Cope Street,Leamore

- Three Bedroom Terraced
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Two Reception Rooms
- Rear Garden
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating 57



£525 PCM

Elmsdale Court,Walsall

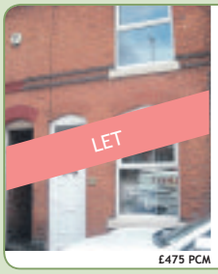
- Two Bedrooms
- Entrance Hall
- Double glazing
- Electric heating
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Allocated Parking
- Rating: 34

£495 PCM

Taverners Close ,Willenhall

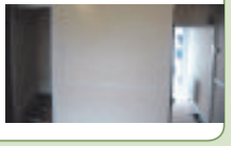
- One Bedroom
- Ground Floor Maisonette
- Entrance
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Rating:75

£425 PCM



Pargeter Street,Walsall

- Two Bedroom Terraced House
- Immaculate Condition
- Two Reception Rooms
- Galley Kitchen
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Rear Garden



£475 PCM

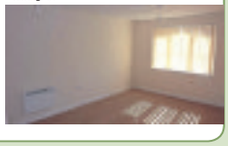
Murdock Way,Walsall

- Three Bedroom Terraced
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Utility
- Front and Rear Gardens
- Rating: 44

£475 PCM

Thornbury Road,Walsall

- Well Kept Two Bedroom 1st Floor Apartment
- Entrance Hallway
- Open Plan Kitchen/Lounge
- Bathroom with Shower Over Bath
- Allocated Parking Space
- Electric Heating
- Rating: 69



£475 PCM

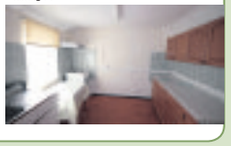
Harrison Street,Walsall

- One Bedroom Ground Floor Flat
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Electric Heating
- Rating:33

£350 PCM

The Exchange ,Bloxwich

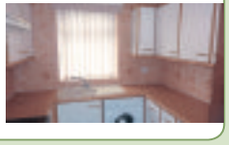
- One bedroom
- Entrance Hallway
- Large Separate Kitchen
- Electric Heating
- DHSS Accepted
- Double Glazing
- Sorry No Pets
- Rating : 7



£400 PCM

Fisher Road,Bloxwich

- One Bedroom Ground
- Off Road Parking
- Enclosed Rear Garden
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Entrance with storage area
- Lounge
- Rating: 69

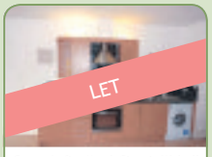


£400 PCM

High Street,Bloxwich

- One Bed Top Floor Apartment
- One Bedroom Top Floor Apartment
- Parking to Rear
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Electric Heating
- DHSS Accepted
- Rating: TBC

£400 PCM



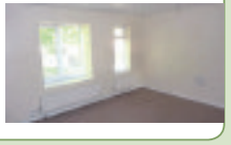
Crown Lofts, Marsh Street ,Walsall

- Studio Apartment
- located in Walsall Town Centre
- Access of the train station
- benefiting from underfloor heating
- balcony with extensive views
- Open Plan Living Area

£350 PCM

Slaney Road,Walsall

- One Bedroom Maisonette
- Fitted Kitchen
- Bathroom with Shower Over
- Quiet Cul-De-Sac Location
- Within 1 Mile of J9 - M6
- Sorry No DHSS, Pets or Smokers
- Close to Pleck Park
- Rating: 80



£395 PCM

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Well-equipped detached bungalow in secluded position

A WELL equipped two-bedroomed detached bungalow, 430 Littleworth Road, Hednesford, lies in a secluded position.

It is for sale through Boot & Son at £164,950. It has a side entrance hall, a lounge with a sliding patio door and extra feature porthole window, a kitchen with plumbing for an automatic washing machine, electric built-in oven, gas hob and oven hood and French doors to the rear garden. There are two bedrooms and a bathroom with a white and chrome suite including a bath with mixer taps and shower.

HEDNESFORD
£164,950

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Address	Wednesday 22nd & 29th March 5th April	Saturday 18th & 25th March 1st & 8th April
39 Abbey Street, Hednesford	10.30am	10.30am
79 Sharon Way, Hednesford	11.00am	11.00am
103 Stafford Street, Heath Hayes	11.30am	11.30am
Land to rear 167 High Street, Chase Terrace	12.00pm	12.00pm
75 High Street, Cheslyn Hay *	12.45pm	12.45pm
Land to rear of 19 Watling Street, Churchbridge	By attending on site with Catalogue to hand	
Land Adj 9 Whitgreave Lane, Rugeley		

* Viewings for 75 High Street - Viewing of vacant flats indicated above
Shops and occupied flat by appointment with auctioneers

LOT 1

LAND REAR OF 19 WATLING STREET, CHURCHBRIDGE, CANNOCK, WS11 3JY
FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION
- Freehold residential building land with benefit for two schemes
- Scheme 1 - Four 2 bedroom semi detached house
- Scheme 2 - Four 2 bedroom detached bungalows
- Convenient for facilities locally and at Cannock Town Centre

GUIDE PRICE £200,000-250,000

LOT 2

39 ABBEY STREET, HEDNESFORD, WS12 4BB
FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION
- Detached bungalow in popular residential area
- Standing on relatively deep plot
- In need to some improvement
- Predominantly double glazed
- Gas fired central heating
- EPC rating F (35)

GUIDE PRICE £100,000+

LOT 3

75 HIGH STREET, CHESLYN HAY, WS6 7AD
FREEHOLD INVESTMENT WITH PART VACANT POSSESSION
- Currently producing £10,300 P.A. but capable of £19,900 P.A when fully let
- Prominently located mixed residential/commercial investment
- Two ground floor lock up shops
- 3 Self contained flats

GUIDE PRICE £175,000+

LOT 4

79 SHARON WAY, HEDNESFORD, WS12 2NN
LEASEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION
- Semi detached house in need of renovation
- Lounge & dining room
- Kitchen
- Three bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Part double glazed
- EPC rating F (21)

GUIDE PRICE £70,000 - £80,000

LOT 5

LAND ADJACENT TO 9 WHITGREAVE LANE, RUGELEY, WS15 1NG
FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION
- Residential Freehold building land
- With outline planning permission for 2 No three bedroomed dwellings
- Approximate dimensions: Area 380m² or thereabouts

GUIDE PRICE £80,000 to £100,000

LOT 6

103 STAFFORD STREET, HEATH HAYES, WS12 2EN
FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION
- Semi detached house
- In need of refurbishment
- Three bedrooms
- Gas fired central heating
- All windows double glazed
- EPC rating E (52)

GUIDE PRICE £120,000+

LOT 7

BUILDING LAND REAR OF 167 HIGH STREET, CHASETOWN, WS7 3XL

FREEHOLD WITH VACANT POSSESSION

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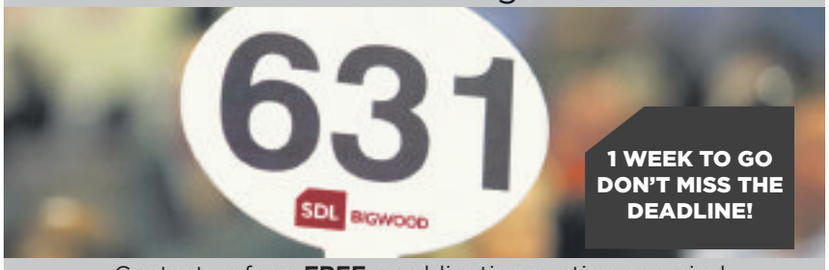

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EPC: E

BEECHWOOD AVENUE, WEDNESFIELD
. Semi-Detached House
. Three Bedroom
. Lounge/Dining Room
. Kitchen
. Conservatory
. UPVC DG, GCH
£625pcm - plus fees

EPC: C

TAME CLOSE, WALSALL
. Detached Bungalow
. Lounge / Dining Room
. Kitchen, Bathroom
. Two Bedrooms
. UPVC DG & GCH
. Driveway, Garden
£600pcm - plus fees

EPC: D

EDWARD COURT, WALSALL
. 2nd Floor Flat
. Reception Hallway, Lounge,
. Kitchen with some appliances,
. Two Bedrooms, Bathroom,
. UPVC DG, GCH
. Car Port
£550pcm - plus fees

EPC: C

COXMOOR CLOSE, BLOXWICH
. Modern Townhouse
. Two Bedrooms
. Lounge
. Kitchen
. Conservatory
. Garden
£525pcm - plus fees

EPC: D

WARDLES LANE, GREAT WYRLEY
. Second Floor flat
. Hallway, Fitted Kitchen
. Lounge With Balcony Off
. Three Bedrooms
. Bathroom With Shower
. Terrace, GCH, UPVC DG
£475pcm - plus fees

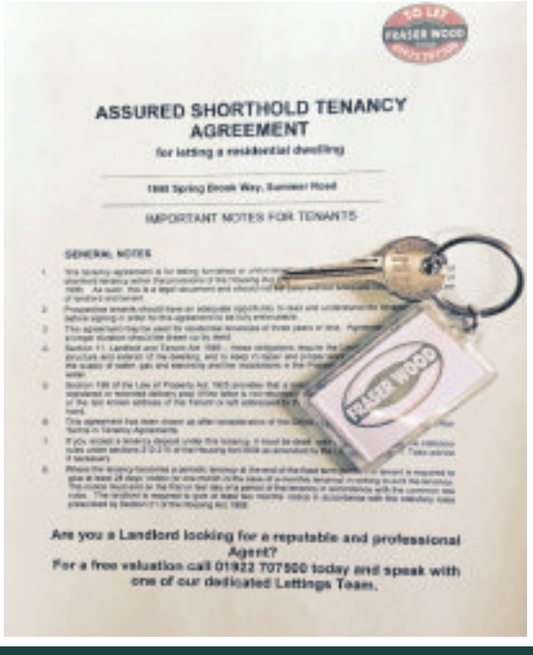
EPC: D

HASKELL STREET, WALSALL
. Mid Terrace Property
. Two Bedrooms
. Lounge, Dining Room
. New Kitchen
. Bathroom
. New Carpets, GCH, UPVC DG
£465pcm plus fees

VICTORIA TERRACE, WALSALL
. First Floor Flat
. Double Bedroom
. Bathroom
. Kitchen
. Lounge
. Economy 7 Heating
. Overlooking Arboretum
£395pcm - plus fees

EPC: D

CHURCH STREET, DARLASTON
. Ground Floor Flat
. One Bedroom
. Lounge, Kitchen
. Shower Room
. UPVC Double Glazing
. Electric Heating
£375pcm - plus fees



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St. Peters Lane Bickenhill

Offers around £675,000

A superb three bedroom, detached bungalow set in a lovely rural location whilst having the benefit of triple glazing, gas central heating, air conditioning, no upward chain. This delightful and spacious property is conveniently located near to the M42 motorway, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham International Airport and its train station. Further comprising, good size L-shaped lounge, fitted kitchen/diner, utility room, reception hall, guest W.C, family bathroom, three double bedrooms, study, rear entrance lobby, impressive well maintained gardens, enclosed patio area, ample off road parking for several vehicles and double garage. Awaiting energy rating.

Abingdon Way Walsall

Offers around £200,000

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Rogers Close Ashmore Park

A well presented two bedroom, semi detached family home having the benefit of pleasant cul-de-sac location, UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. The property further comprises, porch, reception hall, through lounge, conservatory, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms, family bathroom, side entry, front and rear gardens. Energy rating C.

Burrowes Street Winn House

A 5th floor two bedroom flat having the benefit of electric central heating and UPVC double glazing and pleasant views over Walsall town and surrounding areas. Ideal for landlord or first time buyer and within walking distance to Walsall town centre. The property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms, intercom, security doors to communal entrance with lift. Energy rating D.

St. Peters Lane Bickenhill

Offers around £675,000

Situated within a sought after rural village is this superbly presented and unique five bedroom detached family home having the benefit of double glazed windows, gas central heating, fitted intruder alarm and no upward chain. This superb property further comprises, reception hall, spacious through lounge with feature fireplace, dining room, luxury kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, guest W.C, study, 5 bedrooms. two ensuites, family bathroom, good size front and rear gardens with hot tub, off road parking for several vehicles, private enclosed driveway and detached double garage. Energy rating TBC.

Yale Road Willenhall

Offers around £160,000

A well presented three bedroom end of terrace family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and potential for side extension. This splendid property further comprises, reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, three bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens, off road parking and detached garage. Awaiting energy rating.

Mehdi Road Oldbury

Offers around £95,000

A spacious two bedroom second floor modern apartment in a popular residential location. Suit landlord as the property is currently let at Â£485pcm. The accommodation comprises of an entrance hall, living/dining room with French doors to a Juliet balcony, two bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom. The property also benefits from double glazed windows, electric central heating and allocated parking. Energy rating C.

St. Peters Road Dudley

Offers around £134,995

●●NO UPWARD CHAIN●● A rare opportunity to purchase a unique two bedroom detached property with attractive canal side views & location and having the benefit of a fitted intruder alarm, part double glazing and gas central heating. The accommodation briefly comprises, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms and shower room. To the rear there is a paved patio and canal side views. Energy rating F.

Segundo Road Walsall

Offers around £115,000

A modern two bedroom semi detached property having the benefit of UPVC double glazing and gas central heating. Ideal for landlord as the property is currently tenanted till April 2017 with the tenant paying Â£499pcm. The property further comprises, porch, lounge, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, family bathroom, front and rear gardens and off road parking for several vehicles. Energy rating D.

Elbow Street Cradley Heath

Offers around £89,995

A superb two bedroom modern apartment, currently let out at £450pcm, ideal for investor/landlord. The property benefits from security entrance with intercom, UPVC double glazing and electric central heating. This top floor apartment further comprises, reception hall, lounge with balcony, fitted kitchen, two bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, allocated parking space and communal gardens. Awaiting energy rating.

Forrest Avenue Essington

Offers around £160,000

●●MUST BE VIEWED, SOUGHT AFTER LOCATION●● A rare opportunity to purchase an improved three bedroom semi detached family home having the benefit of UPVC double glazing, gas central heating and no upward chain. Located in a pleasant cul-de-sac over looking fields to the rear and further comprising, porch, reception hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, utility area, three bedrooms, family bathroom, garage (used as an office), rear gardens, block paved driveway for several vehicles. Energy rating D.

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NEW

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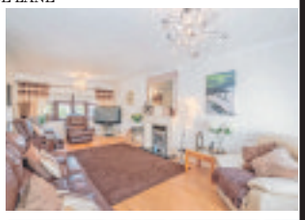
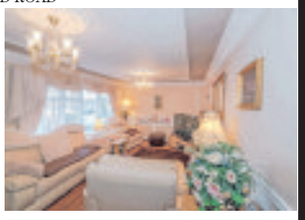


- Extended Bungalow
- Through Hallway,
- Lounge Diner,
- Study,
- Refitted Kitchen,
- Conservatory,
- Three/Four Bedrooms
- Bathroom.
- Two Driveways,
- Car Port, Garage

£329,950

NEW

BLOXWICH
LYDFORD ROAD



- Through Hallway,
- Lounge Diner,
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen,
- Sitting Room,
- Further Entrance Hallway,
- Two Double Extended Bedrooms and
- Bathroom.
- Block Paved Driveway,
- Tandem Garage,
- Generous private garden

£285,000

NEW

WALSALL
VICTORIA AVENUE

- Reception Hallway,
- Formal Lounge,
- Dining Room,
- Kitchen.
- Conservatory,
- Guest WC,
- Three Double Bedrooms
- Generous Bathroom.

£195,000

NEW

BROWNHILLS
MILL ROAD

- Modern Family Home
- Hall, Lounge
- Kitchen/Diner
- 3 Bedrooms
- En-Suite
- Conservatory
- Driveway
- Gardens

£145,000

NEW

ESSINGTON
BROAD LANE

- Chain Free
- 2 Reception Rooms
- Kitchen
- Ground Floor
- Bathroom
- 2 Bedrooms
- Rural Location
- Parking

£139,950

NEW

BLOXWICH
PENDEREL STREET

- Extended Semi
- Hallway
- Lounge
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Utility Room, WC
- 4 Bedrooms
- Driveway, Garage

£139,950

NEW

BLOXWICH
WOODCROFT COURT

- Modern First Floor
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- Entrance Hallway
- Lounge
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- Bathroom
- Communal Grounds
- Parking

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LOT 1 Wednesbury Road Walsall

31st March 10:45am

This two bedroom terraced property is situated in a popular residential area a short distance from Walsall Town Centre. The property is in need of complete modernisation and improvement. With all amenities close at hand this property is ideally suited towards an investor. Ground Floor Front reception room (3.6m x 3.6m), Rear reception Room with access to cellar (3.6m x 3.6m), Kitchen with rear door providing access to garden (3.8m x 2m), Bathroom (2.6m x 2m) First Floor Bedroom one with window to front (3.6m x 3.6m), Bedroom two with window to rear (3.6m x 3.6), Box Room (3.5m x 1.1m) Outside At the rear of the property there is an overgrown garden.

●Guide Price £64,000 PLUS

LOT 2 Derwent Close Willenhall

31st March 12pm

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom semi detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is ideally suited to either a first time buyer or investor. With all amenities close at hand the property comprises: Ground Floor, Front door leads to entrance W.C. and Lounge (7.2m x 4.6m), Kitchen with rear door providing access to garden and garage. (3m x 2.1m) First Floor, Bedroom one with windows overlooking the front of the property (3.5m x 2.5m), Bedroom two with windows to front (2.7m x 2m), Bedroom three with windows overlooking the rear garden (3.6m x 2.7m) Bathroom (1.9m x 1.1m). Outside, At front of the property there is a driveway giving access to the front door and garage

●Guide Price £115,000 PLUS

LOT 2a Rockingham Close Bloxwich

There will be no viewings at the property

Purpose built ground floor flat situated close to Bloxwich centre with all facilities provided. Sold subject to an Assured Shorthold Tenancy from 7th December 2016 for 6 months at £395.00 PCM. The accommodation comprises:- Tenure:Leasehold Accommodation: Reception Hall, Lounge 3.8m x 3.2m, Kitchen 2.4m x 2.2m with sink unit, drainer, base and wall cupboards, electric oven and hob, Bedroom One 3.1m x 2.5m with night storage heater and window to front, Bedroom Two 3.1m x 2.3m with window to front, Bathroom having matching white suite comprising panelled bath, wash hand basin and w.c.

●Guide Price £55,000 PLUS

LOT 3 Sandwell Street Walsall

31st March 10:15am

This two bedroom terraced property is in need of modernisation. The property is situated a short distance from Walsall town centre and the A34 which offers a direct transport link into Birmingham. This property is ideally suited towards investors and with all amenities close at hand it comprises: Ground Floor Lounge (3.6m x 3.6m), Reception Room (3.6m x 3.6m), Kitchen (3.2m x 1.5m), Bathroom (2.1m x 1.4m) First Floor Bedroom one with window to front (4.1m x 3.6m), Bedroom two (4.1m x 3.6m) Outside At the rear of the property there is a small yard.

●Guide Price £75,000 PLUS

LOT 4 Land, Hen Lane Coventry

By appointment through Auctioneers

This Freehold development site which amounts to approx 0.5 of an acre is offered with Planning (subject to conditions) Coventry City Council Application No: FUL/2014/1180 for erection of 8 residential dwellings. Situated between Winding House Lane, Hen Lane and Orpington Drive, adjacent to the A444 Phoenix Way island, opposite the Ricoh Arena, the site offers an ideal opportunity for a small to medium size developer. The proposed development includes 4 detached properties of approximately 90 sq metres (968 sq ft) each and 4 semi detached properties at approx 77 sq metres (828 sq ft). Tenure: Freehold

●Guide Price £350,000 PLUS

LOT 4a Station Street Darlaston

There will be no viewings at the property

The Auctioneer has not inspected the property, however assumes the accommodation is as follows:- Victorian end terraced property having Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Bathroom, Two Bedrooms. Tenure: Freehold Tenancy: The property is currently tenanted and the tenant pays £345.20 every four weeks.

●Guide Price £59,000 PLUS

LOT 5 Building to the rear of, 9-11 Station Road Erdington

By appointment through Auctioneers

Situated to the rear of 9-11 High Street, Erdington, accessed via a shared vehicular driveway, occupying a convenient location, this multi use building lends itself to a number of uses. Set over two floors, the property provides good storage space or warehousing aswell as office space and access for housing of a vehicle. All uses are subject to confirmation of necessary planning approval and regulations. Ground Floor Roller Shutter to store space (9.6m x 2.79m), Back Office (7.8m x 4.9m), Office 1 (5.2m x 3.4m), Office 2 (2.3m x 3.5m), Office 3 (3.7m x 2.4m), Office 4 (9.7m x 3.8m), Kitchen with Worcester gas central heating (2.45m x 2.48m). First Floor Office 5 (13.4m x 3.7m), Office 6 (4.5m x 4.5m) Buyers Premium A Buyers Premium of £900.00 inc v.a.t.

●Guide Price £80,000 PLUS

LOT 5a Land, Rudge Close Willenhall

Viewings: This site is open to viewings

Residential building plot with Planning Permission (subject to conditions) Application No 14/0650/FL. Situated on a popular residential development for the erection of six 2 bedroom houses and two 3 bedroom houses. Planning: Subject to obtaining the necessary planning consents the land may be considered suitable for residential redevelopment. The proposed dwellings would need to be sited with care to avoid overlooking adjoining dwellings. The existing access is not capable of adoption. Services: Mains services are understood to be available in the vicinity of the property, but prospective purchasers should make their own independent enquiries as to the suitability of services for their particular requirements. Ground Conditions & Contamination: Prospective purchasers must undertake their own investigations with regard to ground conditions and contamination and fully satisfy themselves as to the suitability of the site for any use the may propose. Plans: Any plans provided with these particulars are for identification purposes only and their accuracy is not guaranteed. Rights of Way, Wayleaves, Easements, Restrictive Covenants etc: The property is sold subject to, or with the benefit of any

●Guide Price £150,000 PLUS

LOT 6 Unett Court, St. Matthews Road Smethwick

3rd April at 11am

This one bedroom ground floor flat is in need of modernisation. The flat is situated in a popular residential area within Smethwick and is within walking distance of multiple schools and Windmill shopping centre. Ideally suited towards an investor and with all amenities close at hand this flat comprises: Tenure Leasehold Ground Floor Lounge with window and door to rear (5m x 2.7m), Kitchen (2.5m x 1.5m), Bedroom (3.7m x 2.2m), Bathroom (2.7m x 1.5m). Outside The flat has gated parking. Tenure Leasehold, 125 years from 01/01/2007

●Guide Price £25,000 PLUS

LOT 7 Sandwell Street Walsall

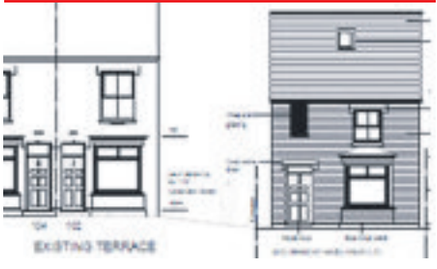
31st March at 9.45 am

This three bedroom detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is situated in a popular residential area and is within walking distance of multiple schools. This makes the property ideally suited towards both home owners as well as investors. Tenure Freehold. Ground Floor, Front door leads to dining room (3.4m x 3m), Lounge (4.5m x 3.3m), Kitchen with door to lean to (3.2m x 2.8m) First Floor, Landing Leads to bedroom one (3.6m x 3m), bedroom two (3.3m x 2.8m), Bedroom three, Bathroom (3.4m x 2m). Outside At the front of the property there is a pathway leading to the front door and at the rear there is a small garden.

●Guide Price £137,500 PLUS

LOT 8 Land Rear of, 57-59 Waverley Street Worcester

The site is open for inspection



Situated in a popular residential area of Worcester within a short distance of the City Centre this Freehold Building Plot is offered for sale with Planning Permission (subject to conditions. Application No: PD16D0468 - Worcester City Council. Although the land is rear of 57-59 Waverley Street, the site fronts Cavendish Street adjacent to 102 Cavendish Street and represents a 3 storey detached dwelling comprising: Living Room, Entrance Hall, Guest Cloakroom, Kitchen at ground floor level. Master Bedroom with En-Suite and additional Bedroom and Bathroom at first floor level and Bedroom three at second floor level. Full Planning and supporting documentation can be found on the Worcester City Council Planning Website. Tenure Freehold

●Guide Price £75,000 PLUS

LOT 9 Borrowdale Road Birmingham

31st March at 3pm

This three bedroom terraced property is in need of modernisation. The property is situated in a popular residential area and is within walking distance of Merrits Brook Primary School. With all amenities close at hand.

●Guide Price £80,000 PLUS

LOT 10 Park Hall Road Walsall

31st March at 11am

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom detached dorma bungalow is set on a generous corner plot. The property is within walking distance from Park Hall school and a short drive from Walsall town centre. The property is in need of modernisation and with all amenities close at hand it comprises: Ground Floor Lounge (8.3m x 3.7m), Conservatory (4.1m x 2.3m), Shower Room (3m x 2m), Kitchen (3.9m x 2.2m), Bedroom One (3.8m x 3m), Bedroom Two (3.9m x 3m), Shower Room 2, Garage (10m x 2.8m) First Floor Bedroom Three (6.9m x 3.5m) Outside At the front of the property there is a large driveway as well as a garden. At the rear of the property there is a well maintained garden.

●Guide Price £350,000 PLUS

LOT 11 Alumwell Road Walsall

31st March 11:15am

Situated in a popular residential area this three bedroom semi detached property is in need of modernisation. The property is located a short drive from both Walsall town centre and Junction 10 which provides popular transport links to both Birmingham and Wolverhampton. With all amenities close at hand. Tenure Freehold

●Guide Price £80,000 PLUS

LOT 12 Whitburn Close Pendeford

By appointment through Auctioneers

Situated in the heart of Pendeford, this modern semi detached property offers scope for further improvement and would make an ideal purchase for first time buyer or investor, with part double glazing and gas fired central heating, the property is conveniently located for all amenities and comprises:Tenure Freehold Ground Floor Fully Enclosed Porch, Reception Hall with stairs off, Open Plan Lounge/Dining Room Lounge measuring 3.46m x 4.59m, Dining Room measuring 2.54m x 2.67m, Kitchen 2.57m x 2.55m with window to rear First Floor Landing with doors off to Bedroom One (front) 4.3m x 3.5m with window to front, Bedroom Two (rear) 3.46m x 2.67m with window to rear, Bathroom with bath, pedestal wash hand basin and low level w.c.

●Guide Price £99,950 PLUS

●Guides are provided as an indication of each seller's minimum expectation. They are not necessarily figures which a property will sell for and may change at any time prior to the auction. Each property will be offered subject to a Reserve (a figure below which the Auctioneer cannot sell the property during the auction) which we expect will be set within the Guide Range or no more than 10% above a single figure Guide

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Handsome estate is Superb Skoda

By Jon Reay

SKODA SUPERB L&K ESTATE

Jon Reay's been learning to live with Skoda's ever-popular Superb Estate. What's it like on a daily basis? Let him explain.

You've got to feel for the Skoda Superb really, haven't you? No matter how hard its designers, engineers and marketing people try, it's always forced to play second (or third) fiddle to the VW Group's other biggish saloon and estate cars – namely the Volkswagen Passat and Audi A4.

Somehow though, I don't think that's fair.

This is now the third generation of Superb that Skoda has graced us with (ignoring the gigantic 1930s creation from which it gets its name), and I reckon it's probably its best one yet.

In styling alone the Superb has matured dramatically.

Like a gawky child star turned Hollywood A-lister, it's suddenly become very handsome indeed – now more than smart enough to mix with its premium rivals.

The interior has come on in leaps and bounds too. Skodas haven't felt badly put together since VW took over in the early '90s, but at times certain elements – such as the quality of materials – have felt deliberately strangled in order for its posher brothers and sisters to keep their premium edge. Not so any more.

There's nothing in our car that'd feel out of place in a VW, and although it's a teensy bit bland to look at, a Passat's insides are hardly bursting with interesting detail either.

There's a downside though. To make it look like a VW and feel like a VW, Skoda has been forced to price it like a VW. Our car is a shade over £33,000 with a couple of options thrown in – not far off what a similarly specified Passat would end up costing.

Pretty much all the car you could want

The Superb has another trump card though – interior space. It's absolutely gigantic inside, with rear leg room in particular beating just about everything this side of a Mercedes S-Class. Even the Audi A6 – which is larger on the outside and starts at some £15,000 more – would struggle to match it.

The Skoda's budget roots have some accidental benefits too. It shares its modular platform with the mk7 Volkswagen Golf which, aside from saving Skoda some hefty development costs, also means that it feels surprisingly light – despite having such an enormous exterior.

Any gripes? Well, Skoda has gone a little over the top when it comes to softening the Superb's ride. There's compliant, and then there's just plain floaty – the Superb finds itself somewhere nearer the latter.

In styling alone the Superb has matured dramatically. The third generation of Skoda Superb is probably its best one yet

The start-stop system likes to have an argument with the automatic gearbox too – often cutting out the very second you need to accelerate away from a junction, leaving the DSG's software to go into a tizzy while you jab the accelerator pedal in desperation.

The Canton-branded sound system isn't as accomplished as its four-door speakers would suggest either, though it comes as standard on our Laurent & Klement-trimmed car, so I won't protest too much.

Beyond that, though, it's hard to fault the Superb – and if I was spending £30,000 on a big estate, I can't think of anything else I'd rather buy…

Highlight of the Month: Finding out that the Superb Estate is pretty much all the car you could want.

For more information, or to book a place at our launch event, visit www.kodiaqevent.co.uk/autosales

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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA Kodiaq range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.0 (9.1) to 48.7 (5.8); Extra Urban 44.1 (6.4) to 61.4 (4.6); Combined 38.2 (7.4) to 56.5 (5.0). CO_2 emissions for the ŠKODA Kodiaq range are 170 to 131 g/km. Standard EU test figures are for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

Alpine's stunning A110 two-seater sports car

Alpine to showcase new A110 in London

The London Motor Show has announced that Alpine's stunning A110 two-seater sports car will be given its UK debut at this year's Battersea Park event.

The A110 hogged the limelight at the recent Geneva Motor Show on its global reveal, with visitors marvelling at its retro-inspired, curvaceous design and aerodynamic features.

And now, alongside a number of high-profile exhibitors from May 4-7, Alpine will showcase its latest creation in front of tens of thousands of enthusiasts at The London Motor Show over the full three days of the event.

Resurrecting the name and spirit of Alpine's Berlinette model for the Sixties and Seventies, the French brand's latest production car is designed to reflect the 'timeless principles of compact size, light weight and agility'. It features a full aluminium platform and upper body that make the car aerodynamic enough to not require a rear wing.

The result is a flowing, elegant body that's sure to turn plenty of heads at The London Motor Show.

The A110 is powered by a 1.8-litre turbo engine that produces 252hp in order to fully exploit the car's unique aerodynamic properties and lightweight and agile frame. Alpine has confirmed that it will race from 0-62mph in 4.5 seconds.

Alec Mumford, Chairman of The London Motor Show, said: "It's a real accolade to have the Alpine A110 showcased on these shores for the very first time at The London Motor Show.

"Due to popular demand, we've already had to release more tickets for May's event, and having the Alpine A110 make its UK debut goes to show just how much weight it carries in the automotive world.

"We're very excited to release the A110 to a UK crowd and anticipate the car well and truly stealing the show."

Great interior finish elevates Range Rover to new status

By Ian Donaldson

RANGE ROVER AUTOBIOGRAPHY DYNAMIC, £132,000

Readers with long memories may recall how you could hose out the floor of the original Range Rover after a muddy day on the farm, thanks to its oh-so-practical rubber floor covering.

Times have changed since the 1970s, you might agree, on catching a glance inside the latest offering from the Solihull production line. These days you'd be more inclined to hose yourself down – or at least take a shower – before daring to slip into the Range Rover's interior.

Certainly that applies to one that's been through the company's Special Vehicle Operations in Coventry, emerging in all its diamond quilted leather and high gloss veneered wood splendour. The fettling elevates the already far from humble Range Rover to Autobiography status, where even the car's handbook is finished in the same quilted leather as the extremely comfortable seats – and the perforated headliner also began life on a cow's back.

Then, there's what you'll find under the bonnet. If your particular Range Rover Autobiography is blessed with an additional 'Dynamic' tag you will have the most powerful version on sale – all 550 horsepower of it.

So the SVAutobiography Dynamic ought to fly as well as impress at the kerbside.

It does, of course, but there's one crucial difference between the svelte, two-seat Macca and the five-seat, four-wheel drive, go anywhere, tow a trailer Rangie.

You've guessed; the latter is rather heavier. At more than 2.4 tonnes the Range Rover is among the heaviest cars on the road and that has consequences on performance. It is still a potent machine, almost surreally quick for such a big beast, with a top speed of 155mph and 0-62mph in 5.1 seconds and all accompanied by a delicious roar from its 5.0 litre supercharged V8 petrol engine.

The new Range Rover is superbly finished and, despite it being one of the heaviest cars on the road, it's still a potent beast

Power reaches all four wheels via a seamlessly changing eight-speed automatic gearbox. A rotary control can be turned to look after things if you head off road for the nearest beach or mountain.

The necessary built-in toughness brings the already mentioned weight penalty and that's reflected in an official average economy of 22.1mpg, but you don't have to try hard to sink beneath 20mpg. Tailpipe emissions figure of 299g/km is similarly profligate.

Big red finished Brembo brake calipers wink at you from behind huge alloy wheels and are an SVAutobiography marker along with graphite grey licks on bonnet, grille, bumper and tailgate and four chromed tailpipes loudly suggesting all that performance. If the way it goes in a straight line is impressive so too is the manner this burly beast tackles the corners, thanks to a thorough going over of its suspension that drops ride height a tad and stiffens up springs and dampers.

The ride remains peerlessly controlled and remains one of the Range Rover's stand out features, the sort of attribute that long-term owners simply adore.

Standard kit extends to a 1,700 watt Meridian sound system, rear centre console with chiller to keep the champers cool and adaptive cruise control.

You can choose, for no extra cash, to include an excellent head up instrument display and big iPad-like screens for rear seat passengers (not a squeak from the little ones!).

So, your £132,000 buys a decadently equipped and very fast Range Rover, which its maker must hope will appeal to someone with, say, a Bentley Bentayga on the shopping list too. The newcomer from Crewe starts at £135,800, little more than this Range Rover and is actually faster, lighter and more economical (a relative term) thanks to its diesel engine.

But it's nowhere near as dripping in goodies as the Range Rover without spending a small fortune on options. That may make all the difference.

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overseas property

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4 Pets & Animals

guns & dogs

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2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

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vets

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5 Business & Farming

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7 Jobs

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

EDNA EMERY (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 53 Monmouth Road Bentley Walsall WS2 0EJ, who died on 24/01/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Lawyers on or before 02/06/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

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(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

Department for Transport

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

The Secretary of State gives notice of an Order made under Section 247 of the above Act entitled "The Stopping up of Highways (West Midlands) (No.18) Order 2017" authorising the stopping up of an irregular shaped north western part width and north eastern part width of Silver Street comprising bellmouths and an irregular shaped northern part width of Silver Street comprising carriageway and footway at Brownhills, in Walsall to enable development as permitted by Walsall Council under references 14/0771/OL and 16/1132

Copies of the Order may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, Tyneside House, Skinnerburn Road, Newcastle Business Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7AR or nationalcasework@dft.gsi.gov.uk (quoting NATTRAN/WM/S247/2651) and may be inspected during normal opening hours at Brownhills Post Office, 55 High Street, Brownhills, Walsall WS8 6HH.

Any person aggrieved by or desiring to question the validity of or any provision within the Order, on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the above Act or that any requirement or regulation made has not been complied with, may, within 6 weeks of 30 March 2017 apply to the High Court for the suspension or quashing of the Order or of any provision included.

S Zamenzadeh, Casework Manager

Walsall Council, Planning, Engineering and Transportation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990 Development Management Procedure Order 2015 (as amended)

The below applications have been made to the Walsall Council. Applications can be viewed at First Stop Shop, Civic Centre, Walsall or online www.walsall.gov.uk/planning. Representations can be made online, email: planningservices@walsall.gov.uk or in writing to Head of Planning and Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG. Representations should be made within 21 days of the date of this notice. **Please note:** Your letter and personal details will form part of the planning file which is a public document and will be available for inspection at the Council Offices. The information may be released as part of a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

16/1913 Bescot Stadium Sunday Market Limited FOR: PART CHANGE OF USE TO CAR BOOT SALES ON THURSDAYS WITH PUBLIC ACCESS BETWEEN 7.30AM AND 2PM. AT: WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB GREEN ZO, WALSALL FOOTBALL CLUB, BESCOT CRESCENT, WALSALL

17/0277 All Saints National Academy FOR: DEMOLITION OF PARTS OF EXISTING BUILDING, NEW ENTRANCE LINK BETWEEN TWO EXISTING BUILDINGS ON THE FRONT ELEVATION, 3 NEW SINGLE STOREY EXTENSIONS TO REAR AND NEW BOUNDARY FENCING. AT: ALL SAINTS NATIONAL ACADEMY, HIGH STREET, BLOXWICH, WALSALL, WS3 3LP

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10 Personals

personal

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general

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The club house at Penn Golf Club. The course is attracting lots of new members

Frosty weather does not deter golfers – and lots of special tournaments are planned

Penn Golf Club's new professional Andy Ellis, left, and director of Union Golf Stuart Bottrill

Keeping greens in tip-top condition – course manager Tim Johnson

Investment drive now paying off

PENN Golf Club are aiming to leave their rivals green with envy as they tee up for a bright future. The ambitious club have enjoyed a productive winter that has seen them appoint a new club professional.

They have also invested in a new fleet of Toro course machinery to help maintain the top class course that sweeps across Penn Common.

Andy Ellis has taken on the role of club professional. He is a regular county player at all age levels and former Staffordshire Matchplay champion, and competed in the British Amateur Championships at Royal Lytham St Annes before turning professional at the age of 23.

And in a further boost to the club, Ellis will be supported by Midlands PGA Golf Professional and director of Union Golf, Stuart Bottrill, who will oversee the provision of the golf shop services. And with Penn continuing to buck the national trend by attracting new members and securing a number of high-profile amateur events this summer, there is a real feelgood factor about the place.

Quality

"There are so many new initiatives going on at present, it's a really exciting time for the club," said secretary Mick Woodhouse. "We are moving forward on several fronts.

"We are delighted that Andy has joined us. He is a local lad and a former club champion at both Oxley and South Staffs, has played regular county golf at all age groups and played in the amateur open at Royal Lytham.

"With a newly-refurbished golf shop, including a top-of-the-range Swing Studio, Andy will provide an exciting programme of coaching and custom fitting to ensure members and visitors alike are improving their game at whatever age and level they are at. We have also continued to support our course manager Tim Johnson with the various investments we have made.

"The course is getting better all the time and we are introducing two new practice areas which will facilitate a teaching and golf development programme for schools, juniors, ladies, gents and families."

The quality of the course has been emphasised yet again with the club due to stage the Staffordshire county trials this month, a Staffordshire Ladies clash with Worcestershire in April, a qualifying round for the Staffs Union of Golf Clubs Club Golfer Champion in June and a Staffordshire Ladies Bronze Alliance meeting in July.

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

"There are so many new initiatives going on at present, it's a really exciting time for the club"

In addition, American Golf have made a double booking with their seniors event, which proved a hit last year, supplemented by a nine-hole competition.

"American Golf held one of their senior qualifying tournaments here last year and they are coming back again this summer and we are also staging one of their nine-hole tournaments," added Woodhouse. "Both of those are nationwide events while we have also got the county involved again.

"It's testament to the quality of the course that we are asked to stage events such as these."

But arguably the biggest boost for the club's hard-working 14-strong board of directors is the continued rise in membership.

"We have 480 members and we are hoping to push that to 500 this year," said Woodhouse. "We interviewed 48 new members last year and more interviews are currently taking place. That is most encouraging because a lot of clubs are struggling to attract new members.

"There is a lot of competition for new members around here because there are a lot of quality of courses in the area. So it is encouraging to see people coming to Penn."

"We have a new range of attractive membership packages across all categories with flexible payment plans and no joining fees.

"Our one-month trial membership has proved popular, allowing prospective members to experience the course and the club facilities."

And prospective new members can take advantage of a family fun day and open afternoon on April 14 when they can play the course for free of charge from 2pm.

Anyone wishing to play on the day should call 01902 341142 to reserve a tee time.

Eddie ready to tackle club business lunch

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club has scored a massive coup by booking England Rugby head coach Eddie Jones as the headline speaker at an £100-a-head lunch.

The Australian is the toast of rugby having just guided England to the Six Nations championship after previously leading them to their record 18th successive victory.

He will be joined by former Stourbridge head coach and Australian international Glen Ella, British and Irish Lions international John Bentley, TV antiques expert Philip Serrell and Lord Digby Jones – former director-general of the Confederation of British Industry at the business lunch.

Stourbridge Rugby chairman Robin Edwards said the excitement is building ahead of the May 5 event, which will see more than 1,100 guests. Tickets are still available and cost £95, plus VAT. But demand has been strong and tickets are being snapped up fast.

Jones is set to meet junior coaches and players from the club. Chairman Robin Edwards hopes Jones can inspire their younger players. Jones will hold morning training sessions prior to the club's corporate lunch event.

Scholars mourn loss of club stalwart, 79

CHASETOWN FC are mourning the loss of another club stalwart.

Club president Brian Baker, aged 79, was a former player and was instrumental in the forming of Chase Terrace Old Scholars back in 1954.

He was affectionately known as 'Blondie' in his playing days and Baker filled a number of roles in his 63 years with the club.

His death comes just a month after the passing away of long-serving Chasetown physio Mick Andrews.

Tributes have been paid to Baker. Boss Dave Stringer said: "Its' been a very difficult start to 2017. Following the death of Mick, Brian is another huge loss.

"He was president of the club, part owner and was Chasetown through and through.

"He was a lovely man who did everything he could for the club and will be sorely missed," Stringer added.

Chasetown chairman and lifelong friend of Mr Baker, Mike Joiner said: "Brian will be sadly missed by all associated with the club.

"For the past 63 years Brian has worked tirelessly for the club and for the past 33 years would be seen at the Scholars Ground day in day out."

Casino chips in with to support 'Bomber'

'BAGGIES Bomber' Tommy Langford lines up for the world WBO middleweight title – and has the support of Birmingham's Broadway Casino.

Langford steps into the ring on April 22 at Leicester Arena to face Georgian Avtandil Khurtsidze.

Just three years after turning professional in September 2012, Langford won his first regional championship, the WBO middleweight title. By 2016 he had claimed the British strap and reclaimed his Commonwealth title. He has an undefeated professional record and now has his sights set on middleweight superstar Gennady Golvkin. Langford, 27, born in Bideford, Devon to Midlands family, is now based in Birmingham and has a season ticket in the Birmingham Road End.

He has been sponsored for the fight by Broadway Casino.

Managing director Denis Dowling said: "We showcase the best of boxing in our lively Manhattan Bar. We are sure the added excitement of our sponsorship of Tommy will see even more avid fans flock to the casino. We are honoured to be able to associate our brand with Tommy, and are thoroughly looking forward to watching him in the ring."

Sport

Golf club investment drive is paying off

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Pics hit by heartbreak of late goal

THERE was late heartbreak for Rushall Olympic as League leaders, Blyth Spartans, snatched victory with the last kick of the game up in the sun-drenched north-east.

It was a bright start by Rushall who saw plenty of the early ball without really threatening before the home side started to get into their stride and went close on the quarter-hour mark as Brian Smikle cleared in front of goal from Luke Armstrong before Sean Reid fired just over from distance.

Jose Veiga did well to beat away a stinging strike from Daniel Maguire on 20 minutes and then denied the same player in the next raid as the Pics' backline was put under increasing pressure.

A free-kick pumped into the area by Jordan Laidler saw Veiga claw the ball away for a corner which caused more problems as Henry Eze headed off the line.

The second half started with Veiga well positioned to thwart Reid's powerful strike before Rushall missed a gilt-edged chance on 55 minutes when a slip in defence by Ryan Hutchinson saw Gurjit Singh played in but he fired wide from a great position. Rushall's resistance was finally broken on 73 minutes when a ball to the far post was only half-cleared and substitute David McTiernan had the simple task of heading home.

As Rushall pressed for a late leveller, Veiga did well to thwart another breakaway with a double save. There was drama late on as a burst of pace from Stan Mugisha saw him break into the area before firing home with a low strike to make it 1-1 in the final minute.

It looked as though Rushall had done enough to claim a point until deep into stoppage time when the ball found its way to Jarrett Rivers, whose low strike beat Veiga.

Coleshill in charge as Wood struggle to make impression

Coleshill Town 5 Walsall Wood 2

COLESHILL kept alive their slim title hopes with a performance led by midfielder Simeon Cobourne. Dean Rathbone opened the scoring on 10 minutes with a curled ball into the far corner.

A minute later a powerful Williams run left of centre saw his pass out wide collected at pace by Spray, his low powerful cross missed by everyone.

The second goal came on 39 minutes with Giovanni Dainty this time finding the net with a superb blast.Dainty was there again after a Cobourne run, tucking home after a deflection.

On 70 minutes Mansell hit a ball from wide right into the near post, Butlin holding the ball up before turning and firing into the roof of the net to give Wood a glimmer of hope. Within two minutes the three goal cushion was restored, Quaynor's ball inside from wide left found Rathbone who buried it and four minute later Beckley made no mistake to make it 5-1.

Wood then lost substitute Lewis Taylor Boyce to two yellow cards but on 76 minutes pulled a goal back.

Cooper steps out for first pro bout

Shaun Cooper

SHAUN Cooper believes he'll be where he belongs when he makes his professional boxing debut in the Black Country next weekend. After 43 amateur bouts, Cooper first punches for pay on the 'New Beginnings' show at the venue in Dudley on Saturday, April 8 and will feature in the lightweight division.

The 22-year-old graduated from Walsall Wood Boxing Club and won four area titles in England Boxing competition, also reaching a Schools Championship national semi-final. He said: "I'm so excited to make my debut and I just want to get in there and do the business. Everyone used to tell me in the amateurs my style was more suited to being a pro.

"I feel like it's my turn and the people that come to watch me fight will see different things, because I'm taking this seriously. I could have done more in the amateurs, but now I'm going to prove people wrong. I want to be up there and doing my best.

"I've had bad decisions go against me in the past, so I don't want to be leaving it in the judges' hands anymore. I'll be trying to take my opponents out." He will be managed and trained by Jon Pegg in Birmingham, along with sessions back at Walsall Wood. He rubs shoulders with the likes of Sam Eggington and Frankie Gavin in Pegg's gym.

Cooper, Kane Baker and Dudley's own Ryan Aston feature in four-round bouts, with Tyler Denny and Andrew Robinson featuring over six. Tickets, are £35 or £50 ringside with waitress service. Contact Shaun directly on 07872 429 921 or via Facebook.

WALSALL FAIL TO SHOW CLASS

Saltleians 19 Walsall 19

WALSALL, on several occasions this season, have only showed glimpses of their true ability when they are away from Delves Road.

During this latest encounter at Saltleians, they showed that they were capable of producing a series of phases and seemed to be in control.

But, by the time the final whistle was blown, they were fortunate to salvage a draw! A Walsall cross field kick led to the first try – a kind bounce saw it land in the hands of Burrows, the Saltleians winger, who then ran in the try from 35 metres. Simpson adding the easy conversion.

The next 15 minutes saw Walsall in full control of the game with their strong set piece and driving game constantly putting the opposition under intense pressure. They had their first score after hooker Alex Jones finished off a powerful drive from a lineout. Weston added the conversion.

The visitors had further opportunities but the players were guilty, once again this season, of squandering try scoring chances. The hosts, in contrast, displayed some good handling skills and they took the lead just before half time.

Walsall did regain the lead with another good piece of play which saw full back Weston make good ground before passing to Ethan Walker who finished off from 30 metres.

Weston's conversion gave his team a 14 – 19 advantage. The visitors found themselves in good attacking positions on several other occasions. Indeed, they should have scored another try, but the ball was kicked ahead instead of it being passed.

However, several of the other opportunities were stopped by the referee's whistle. A Walsall driving scrum being penalised was particularly disheartening for the forwards and the coaches! All these penalties resulted in the hosts securing good attacking positions. They, eventually, levelled the score with a good try after accurate passing put Burrows over for his second.

This Saturday Walsall will be welcoming near neighbours Veseyans to Delves Road in what will be the last home league game of the season. The game kicks off at 3pm.

Joy as Bloxwich bring it home

Victory for Bloxwich hockey players after the final day of the season

Leamington 1 Bloxwich 3

BLOXWICH Men's First XI beat Leamington in a tense match to win the league in an epic final day of the season.

Bloxwich started off the match well with Jamie Proberts sneaking in a goal in the opening five minutes. Harry Robinson then struck from top of the D to score Bloxwich's second.

Bloxwich looked to be cruising to the league title but made it difficult for themselves by letting Leamington back into the match with a poor goal from a short corner.

After the reading of the riot act from coach Steve Mallows at half time, Bloxwich knew they had to up their game to ensure the league title was theirs at the end of the season.

Bloxwich put in the extra effort in the second half with defender John Morris heroically stopping the ball from going into the top corner of the Bloxwich goal with his wondering wand of a stick. Bloxwich went up the other end and Jake Perkins scored the decisive goal that gave Bloxwich the win and the league title.

Bloxwich have worked tirelessly this season, fantastically as a team and dug deep in many tough fixtures. The character of the team shone through and Bloxwich will go to their annual dinner dance next week in a jubilant mood after a miraculous season.

Boss is on the hunt for new striker

WOLVERHAMPTON Community Sporting boss Andy Paddock is on the hunt for a new striker after seeing top scorer Dan Westwood leave for Telford.

The prolific Westwood reached 100 goals in just 72 games for Sporting but left on Thursday after the club agreed a fee with the National League North outfit.

Paddock admits their rivals will have been boasted following Westwood's departure and so it proved as Sporting, second in the West Midlands Premier Division, saw third-placed Wolverhampton Casuals close the gap to three points on Saturday.

Casuals took the honours in an exciting 2-1 victory over West Midlands Premier Division. The game was pretty even until the Casuals forged ahead thanks to Liam Hughes' delightful chip over James Gettings in the 33rd minute.

The home side contained their visitors and increased their lead when Kevin Nickle intercepted a midfield pass to go on to beat Gettings on 57 minutes.

Sporting were finding it hard to break down the Casuals defence but pulled one back through Jon Letford finding the net from eight yards in the 85th minute. Casuals kept their nerve as Sporting went close as Nicky Dodd's cleared of the line in the dying minutes.

Paddock said: "We had an offer from Stafford Rangers for Dan the other week which was accepted but he decided he didn't want to go," the boss said. "A lot of clubs have come in since. And with the club the size of Telford there was no way we could stand in his way.

"We are looking to bring someone in. It's good for Dan. At the end of the day he has gone to a big club at a good level.

"I'm really pleased for him, it's a great move. But clubs around us will get a boost by seeing Dan leaving. But the lads we have are good lads and will respond."

Defeat despite a spirited fightback

Littleton 2 Pelsall Villa 1

PELSALL Villa suffered a second successive league defeat against Littleton on Saturday at Five Acres.

The hosts took the lead midway through the first half when the officials awarded a penalty with what can only be described as a curious decision.

An early second half goal gave Littleton a two-goal lead and with the Villains being reduced to 10 men with 20 minutes to go, it looked like the game was gone for the visitors. However, sustained pressure saw Villa reduce the deficit when Jack Arrowsmith turned the ball home after a corner.

★★★

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